

# University criteria for *promotion* from Assistant to Associate Professor

**Academic Years: 2024-25, 2025-26**

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## Preamble and Context for the Criteria

Florida Polytechnic University relies on the faculty to execute the core mission and a high-functioning faculty is necessary to insure the long-term health of the institution. Standards for faculty achievement in the reappointment and promotion process are expressed in the University Criteria and these standards underpin the “high-functioning faculty” that is necessary to achieve our mission which is: *“Serve students and industry through excellence in education, discovery, and application of applied sciences and engineering.”*

A core component in developing a great faculty body is the faculty promotion process. University wide criteria for faculty promotion are specified by this document. Each academic department will apply the criteria in their promotion process and each academic department will develop clarifications to the criteria. The purpose of the departmental clarifications is to provide departments with the opportunity to comment on how faculty in the academic disciplines within a department can demonstrate the academic excellence that is required by the University Criteria. The clarifications do not replace the University Criteria, the Clarifications help the interpretation of the university Criteria at the departmental level. Both the University Criteria and the Department Clarifications focus on how faculty demonstrate that they have, and will continue to, serve the University’s mission.

Promotion to Associate Professor considers the faculty member’s contributions to the university and requires that an individual through demonstrated activity and contribution to Florida Poly has met the University Criteria and achieved the rank Associate Professor. Promotion is based on demonstrated accomplishments, requires a demonstration of accomplishment at Florida Poly, and very importantly considers the individuals ongoing trajectory at Florida Poly. Promotion to Associate Professor also requires indications of future accomplishments that will be achieved in order for a faculty member to be worthy of the rank “Associate Professor.”

The faculty handbook (section 4.2.2) sets minimum qualifications for the faculty ranks (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor). These qualifications are organized to guide evaluation of a faculty member, based on his/her evidence of achievement in Instruction, Research or Scholarship, and Service. The faculty handbook sets these minimum qualifications by rank and defines areas for evaluation:

*The evaluation of teaching may include materials and other indicators of delivery quality, coursework development and curriculum development; research may include traditional publication but may also include tech transfer and tech development activities, and/or leading-edge practice in industrial or business organization; service should consider effort in support of the department, institution and their respective field.*

The faculty handbook specifies that an Associate Professor must achieve: “In addition to meeting minimum qualifications for Assistant Professor, a demonstrated record of scholarly activity, demonstrated excellence and as appropriate independence and collaboration in teaching, and, as appropriate, course and/or curriculum development commensurate with the university’s mission and relevant academic discipline(s); evidence of a positive and growing reputation as an educator and scholar in his/her chosen field; and promise of continued successful performance.”

The overall evaluation of a candidate for promotion to Associate Professor must consider the long-term impact that a faculty member has, and is expected to have, on the institution and its mission. This evaluation must consider a faculty member’s efforts that contribute to the institution and determine if the individual faculty member is effective in executing the University mission. Finally, it is imperative that the contribution and effectiveness of the faculty member, both positive and negative, is fully considered. These factors are used to

provide a recommendation on a continued and long-term employment obligation offered to the faculty member by the University. In all cases, the quality and quantity of the work done is an important factor in the promotion decision.

A faculty member's set of annual performance evaluations represents the outcome of an annual process primarily performed by a single individual with a focus on a single year performance period. These reviews therefore are neither determinative nor sufficient to justify (or deny) promotion. The evaluation of a candidate must consider the assigned workload for the faculty member, including periods of the summer that are compensated, as the contributions to the three areas (instruction, scholarship or research, and service) are evaluated. Overall, the evaluation must consider the impact that the faculty member has on the university mission and community. To achieve the rank Associate Professor, individuals must have demonstrated sustained accomplishment in their assigned roles for multiple years.

- Given the importance of excellence in education to the mission, faculty must provide evidence of accomplishment in teaching in order to warrant recommendation for promotion.
- Faculty members must demonstrate achievement in research and scholarship consistent with their assigned duties and rank.
- Faculty must also provide evidence of involvement in the university community with service or other activities that add value, commensurate with their assigned duties. An emerging area to consider is how a faculty member supports students beyond the classroom at Florida Poly.

The following sections set institutional expectations in the areas of Teaching, Research and Scholarship, and Service for faculty promotion to Associate Professor. Committees are reminded that a positive recommendation for promotion, if accepted, will result in a six-year contract for the individual under review.

## University criteria for promotion to Associate Professor

For an Associate Professor the minimum qualifications stated in the faculty handbook are: *“a demonstrated record of scholarly activity, , demonstrated excellence and as appropriate independence and collaboration in teaching, and, as appropriate, course and/or curriculum development commensurate with the university’s mission and relevant academic discipline(s); evidence of a positive and growing reputation as an educator and scholar in his/her chosen field; and promise of continued successful performance.”* The three areas (**instruction, scholarship or research, and service**) are listed below, along with a narrative that provides background on expectations for a faculty member seeking promotion. Individuals that are to achieve promotion must meet the minimum criteria for the rank.

### 1.0 Instruction

**Core Criterion:** A faculty member must clearly be contributing to the instructional mission by demonstrating proficiency and breadth in instructional quality and capacity.

Instruction, including regular classroom and laboratory teaching, laboratory / project-based learning instruction, effective development/application of new instructional methods, new course development, directing thesis committees, and other instructional activities. Each of these is discussed in the listing provided below.

**1.1 Criterion Minimum Requirements.** Overall promotion requires demonstrated proficiency and breadth in instructional quality and capacity.<sup>1</sup> Key elements to be considered are instructional delivery, cooperative instructional participation in multi-section courses, leadership as appropriate in multi-section courses, instructional material development, and in most cases course development. Promotion to Associate Professor requires a demonstration of instructional maturity; the applicant must provide evidence of independent delivery of an appropriate section of the curriculum aligned with their department’s needs and as appropriate evidence of both collaboration and leadership in the delivery of multi-section courses .

#### 1.2 Overall Criterion Considerations & Requirements

**1.2 (A) A faculty member must clearly be contributing to the instructional mission,** by delivering their assigned courses, and also by contributing to the departmental and university educational mission. To demonstrate instructional effectiveness, faculty at the time of promotion must show evidence that their teaching proficiency is sufficient that they can independently deliver their courses in a manner that is consistent, delivers the set of subjects that comprise the student learning outcomes, holds high academic standards while facilitating student success and that they are effective in the classroom. Evidence of meaningful collaboration with other faculty is a requirement,<sup>2</sup> sensible syllabus construction (including thoughtful assessment planning that appropriately measures student individual performance) is a requirement, and campus presence consistent with the expectations for a full-time faculty member is a requirement. For multi-section courses, a requirement is positive and appropriate collaboration with other faculty to provide a consistent and high-quality instructional experience for students. New course development must show not only that the course was developed but that the course was appropriate and executed effective learning outcomes consistent with the degree(s) supported by the course. Instruction is

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<sup>1</sup> Committees must consider the departmental context as they evaluate this criterion.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence can be participation in an active manner in departmental matters, collaboration in course delivery, participation in institutional matters, participation in joint proposals, etc.

further considered based upon the list provided below and faculty are strongly encouraged to consider these items, consistent with their work-assignment, as they prepare their promotion dossier.

**1.2 (B) Instructional effectiveness** will not be judged solely by Student Assessment of Instruction results or by the “D, F, W” rate.

**1.2 (C) Student assessment of instruction** results are insufficient on their own (and indeterminate) to demonstrate instructional effectiveness.

**1.3 Factors to consider in terms of “effort”** are how many times the faculty member has delivered the class, the “efficiency” of the schedule for the faculty member in terms of how many course preparations are present in a semester, the amount of support provided for the delivery by student assistants (graduate or undergraduate) or technicians.

**1.4 Factors to consider in “quality”** of instruction include, but is not limited to, adhering to standards established by the departments (includes courses with common exams or in ‘core’ of degree program) – a minimum requirement is: Appropriately professional *cooperation with co-instructors to deliver ALL materials in the syllabus and complete delivery of the course in a satisfactory manner. The Associate Professor **must** be capable of independently delivering departmental courses and where appropriate cooperating or leading multi-section courses.*

#### 1.5 Further Criterion Considerations

**1.5 (A) For courses that are highly coordinated**, a requirement is that faculty carefully adhere to the common expectations of the course set by either the department chair or course coordinator. For faculty to achieve the rank Associate Professor, faculty must appropriately execute the duties assigned to them for the course (including leadership for the course if assigned). In a ‘common, multiple section course’ or ‘core’ course, failure to deliver all materials in the syllabus is cause for concern.

**1.5 (B) For repeated deliveries**, faculty should present evidence that the course is effective and where possible that the effectiveness of their instruction is improving.

**1.5 (C) Laboratory / project-based learning instruction** and other instructional activities. Evidence must demonstrate that the instructional activity is well planned, and the learning outcomes are achieved. A minimum requirement is that instructional materials are sufficiently complete and organized so that students can use them to achieve the learning outcomes for the activity. For coordinated courses, non-course coordinators must do their part to deliver a sufficiently complete and organized course.

**1.5 (D) Effective development/ application of new instructional methods that have the potential to enhance the learning outcomes.** New pedagogical interventions should be supported by the literature and aligned with a reasonable rationale that justify the exploration/adoption of such technique. The university encourages new instructional methods, but not at the expense of learning outcomes; hence experimentation with new instructional techniques must be well coordinated with a chair and care taken to deliver all course topics. If an instructor chooses to implement a new teaching technique, they must be sure the course materials /topics in the syllabus are not compromised.

**1.5 (E) New course development.** This activity ranges from development of a new course for Florida Poly to significant redesign of an existing course where the instructor develops a substantial amount of material for the delivery of the course. Creating a significant volume of high-quality new course materials with appropriate assessment methods demonstrates the maturity of the faculty member. However, delivering course materials consisting primarily of the publisher’s resources indicates only that the faculty member can find the resources and deliver them. Further, a new course based on random inclusion of course materials not aligned with the outcomes and subject matter of the course

indicates that the faculty is not sufficiently mature to merit promotion. **New course development is not a requirement for promotion.**

- 1.5 (F) Other instructional activities.** These activities typically include, but are not limited to, course coordinator delivery of courses across multiple sections, preparation of ABET materials. Course coordinators for multi-section courses (lecture/lab) have the lead role in developing course materials, maintaining Canvas shell to share course materials (lectures, assignments, rubrics, etc.) with others, conducting weekly/bi-weekly course coordination meetings, coordinating availability of supplies, and collecting formal and informal feedback for instructors (who would be fulfilling roles as described in 'part c' of this item.) A minimum standard is to meet with faculty regularly to create an appropriate outcome and to provide an organizational framework for success of the multi-section course. Preparation of ABET materials is similarly a significant responsibility; a minimum contribution is to provide timely delivery of materials in association with the schedule that has been agreed upon.

## 2.0 Research or Other Creative/Scholarly Activities

**Core Criterion:** Promotion to Associate Professor requires a faculty member to **demonstrate a unique and scholarly expertise in their field** and have activity that aligns with this professional direction.

*Includes scholarly publications, proposal and grant activity, support and advising of graduate students.*

- 2.1 Criterion Minimum Requirements** for promotion to Associate Professor requires evidence of a research plan and alignment of the faculty member's activity and accomplishment with the plan. The faculty member's portfolio should provide evidence that ***their research trajectory is appropriate for the institution and building their own reputation in their field.***

### 2.2 Further Criterion Considerations

- 2.2 (A) Directing thesis committees or project advisory groups.** A successful thesis advisor or project should provide evidence that they have purposefully and deliberately guided the student through the process. The quality of a master's thesis or project may vary due to circumstances beyond an advisor's (committee chair's) control, so documentation of the process is paramount to demonstrating success by the faculty member. Members of thesis committees should participate and provide input in the student's project; the advisor should play an active role in a student's research or project and through their efforts help students produce a greater impact in their work. Faculty advisors are responsible for providing guidance in an advisory role to identify a viable and suitable project, that resources are available to complete the project, and to provide timely feedback during all stages of the thesis or project including careful feedback on the student's thesis. Participation in the graduate program, especially by being a graduate student thesis advisor or project advisor is strongly encouraged (departmental clarifications should comment on the graduate program and how faculty in the department can appropriately participate in the graduate program). Individuals that seek promotion are strongly encouraged to be active participants in the development of a high-quality graduate program.
- 2.2 (B) Publications and patents** must be evaluated for their quality and impact; to inform this statement, departments as a part of refining the university criteria must provide recommendations for publication venues (journals, peer-reviewed books and conferences) that are considered high value for the fields represented by the department. In addition, departments can comment on citation level or readership. As a part of a review, department committees are expected to provide input on the quality of the journals and/or conferences present in a faculty member's promotion package (note that this includes

- identification of predatory journals as well as specification of journals that are of high quality). In all cases, the publication and/or patent list should provide evidence that demonstrates the expertise of the individual in the field.
- 2.2 (C) Articles published in a mainstream journal, presentations given at well-known conferences, or books published by a university or mainstream academic press are easier to assess since departments have the opportunity to provide input regarding conference quality and journal quality. More specialized outlets may be appropriate depending on the faculty member's area of expertise. In all cases, faculty should be able to defend the appropriateness and quality of the venues in which they publish. *Faculty for all publications must indicate their contribution to the publication and the types of collaboration with co-authors.* A faculty member's presentation at conferences should build their reputation and that of the university.
- 2.2 (D) **Multi-author publications** are many times warranted. However, the author list should make sense and a "me too" style of publication is strongly discouraged. When individuals are listed as an author on a publication, they should be able to identify what they contributed to the publication and what fraction of the publication's content is directly from their efforts. As noted on item 1 above, a faculty member must state their contribution to a publication. Finally, interdisciplinary work by its nature will result in multi-author publications and that this work is valued by the institution.
- 2.2 (E) **Articles that are simply the result of student work in a class**, with little faculty involvement by themselves do not indicate scholarly achievement; similarly, publications in low quality conferences are appropriate steppingstones to more prestigious publications recognized by their respective professional societies but are not significant in their own right. Articles where a faculty member provided critical and ongoing guidance to students are encouraged.
- 2.2 (F) **Provisional patents** are difficult to assess because they are not reviewed and may or may not indicate scholarly achievement. Individuals must provide sufficient information for reviewers to assess the importance of the provisional filing and the faculty member's contribution to the work.
- 2.2 (G) **Patents that have been granted** represent a more significant achievement and their importance may be assessed by the "use" of the patent.
- 2.2 (H) **Activity with industrial partners** documented by how the activity has advanced the state of the art of the partner and/or how the activity has brought value to Florida Poly.
- 2.2 (I) **Research, creative and scholarly activity** should be judged in a way that is appropriate for a particular discipline. Committee members should be careful not to substitute their own discipline's standards for those of another discipline.
- 2.3 **Proposal and grant application** activity should be documented in a way that shows the contribution of the faculty member to the overall grant effort. Proposals should align with the department and/or institution research directions and be submitted according to standard and appropriate procedures. Collaborations both within Florida Poly and external to the university are strongly encouraged. **While there is no minimum standard for grant activity, for most of the fields represented at Florida Poly, strong participation and/or**
- 2.4 **authorship in proposals that seek external funding is a requirement for promotion.** If the candidate belongs to a discipline where there is no funding opportunity, evidence of critical peer review must be included in the candidate's publication record. Internally and externally funded grants, contracts, and awards are typically required to advance research agendas, and in the STEM disciplines, funding typically provides evidence of critical peer review.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, candidates are strongly encouraged to provide evidence of applications to appropriate external funding opportunities. Funding history, prestige of the funding source(s), strenuousness of the peer review, oversubscription rate of the funding

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<sup>3</sup> However, note that the funding availability across the STEM disciplines varies greatly and must be appropriately considered.

opportunity, size of the award, and impact on the productivity and quality of scholarship will be considered in the evaluation. On grants where multiple authors contribute, the candidate must provide an explanation of their technical contribution to the effort.



### 3.0 Service to external professional societies and contributions to the University and department.

**Core Criterion:** Promotion to Associate Professor requires that a faculty member is contributing to their department, the university, and profession in a positive way and has demonstrated capacity to assume a leadership role.

*“Service” includes supporting activities for external professional societies and contributions to the University and department.*

**3.1 A Minimum Requirement** is that the faculty member, consistent with their duty assignments, contributes positively to the department, the university, and their chosen professional field.

#### 3.2 Criterion Considerations

**3.2 (A) No service activity of significance overall for a multi-year period is strong cause for concern.**

**3.2 (B)** Simply being a member of a committee is not an indication of service contribution; a faculty member must provide evidence of how their effort provided value to the university. The service contribution must be appropriate to the co- or extra-curricular activity that the faculty member is an active advisor or participant.

**3.2 (C)** Service to one’s professional society should be present and demonstrated in order to achieve promotion. For all faculty, using professional society service to build one’s own reputation can be effective.

**3.2 (D) Service can include hosting a conference, outreach to the community that is coordinated with the university, judging internal and external competitions, community service that is coordinated with the university.**

#### 3.3 Special Consideration of Administration Contribution

As with other universities, Florida Poly must acknowledge that administrative activity is critical to the success of the university and that this activity must be included appropriately in the evaluation of an individual’s request for promotion. In the case of individuals that are “on-time,” the effectiveness of their leadership may be used as a consideration of their overall effort. The following discussion closely follows language adopted by the University of California at Santa Barbara.

*“Faculty Administrators, including Department Chairs, and Directors, who discharge their administrative duties with thoroughness and distinction and who give effective academic leadership to their department may not have much time left for teaching and research. It may be difficult for Administrators to maintain themselves as scholars during the period of service in the administrative position. It must be acknowledged that they have had to give up to administrative duties time they would otherwise have been able to devote to teaching and scholarship and reviewing agencies must take into account the extent and quality of their administrative service in considering them for merit increases and for promotions. The principle involved is that academic leadership is, in itself, a significant academic activity. Both departments and reviewing agencies should take the amount of administrative service into consideration when setting expectations for achievement within a review period. While service in and of itself cannot serve as the primary grounds for advancement, it is appropriate to consider excellence in administrative service as part of the academic review.*

*While time devoted to administrative service may be taken into consideration regarding expectations for merit review, career reviews (i.e. Promotions in rank, and advancement to Step VI of the Professorship or to an*

*above scale salary), are of greater significance than merit increases within rank and cannot be justified wholly on the basis of administrative service. The standards for advancement may not be lessened. Nevertheless, although promotion from Associate Professor to Professor requires evidence of intellectual attainment and growing distinction, substantial evidence of these qualities may well be found in the way in which successful administrators perform their duties. In the case of promotion for Assistant Professor to tenure rank, the requirement of 'superior intellectual attainment, as evidenced both in teaching and research or creative achievement' cannot be waived. But an Assistant Professor who has served effectively as an administrator has evidenced a considerable degree of intellectual maturity if he/she has provided academic leadership for persons of higher rank, and this certainly should be considered in evaluating his/her promotion to tenure.*

*In assessing the merits of an administrator, it will be necessary to follow the regular procedures of review. However, a special effort should be made to assure that Administrators are not passed over. The advice of other administrative officers, individuals outside of the department, and reviewing agencies will be particularly important in such cases. After an administrator leaves the position, his/her further advancements in salary or rank should be judged by the regular criteria."*

## 4.0 Overall recommendation

**Core Criterion:** For Promotion to Associate Professor, the candidate must demonstrate strong, ongoing contribution to the University, ability to perform their full suite of duties with a high degree of quality and independence by demonstrating accomplishment in teaching, appropriate trajectory in research, and service that positively advances the University, department, and program.

**4.1 Minimum Requirements:** For an Associate Professor the minimum qualifications are: “a demonstrated record of scholarly activity, teaching, and, as appropriate, course and/or curriculum development commensurate with the university’s mission and relevant academic discipline(s).” Individuals that are to achieve promotion must meet the minimum criteria for the rank.

**4.2 Overall Considerations:** Florida Poly is growing quickly and the demands placed upon faculty may include effort to build the institution. Consideration of this effort is necessary and appropriate. Such consideration should be based on the “non-traditional effort” that advances the institution and how this effort has impacted time availability for more traditional teaching, research, or service. It is incumbent on the faculty member under review to provide a clear and honest presentation of the nature and impact of their contribution and how it is impactful for the institution. *The overall evaluation of a faculty member must consider the long-term impact of a faculty member’s efforts and how these efforts positively or negatively impact the institution and its mission. The review committees must exercise judgement regarding this impact.* In addition, consideration of the evidence provided in an individual’s application should carefully consider the effect of the course load assigned to the faculty member, resource availability, faculty rank, and any other assigned university duties, when comparing faculty achievement for Florida Poly faculty to those at other institutions.

**4.2 (A)** Noting the statement above, individuals must provide evidence of “demonstrated proficiency, independence, collaboration, where appropriate leadership, and breadth in **instructional** quality and capacity.”

**4.2 (B)** Similarly, a faculty member must provide evidence of a growing **research** reputation and indications of research accomplishment.

**4.2 (C)** Finally, the dossier must provide evidence of involvement in the university community with **service** or other activities that add value to the university community.

**4.3 Review committees** must work carefully and confidentially, as they consider the reviews for faculty members and the committees must set aside personal relationships and consider the accomplishments of the faculty member being reviewed.