Tenure and Promotion Criteria and Procedures
Department of Computer Science and Engineering
University of South Carolina

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The Department of Computer Science and Engineering (hereafter "Department") has established the following procedures and criteria that will be used in evaluation of a faculty member for promotion and/or tenure. The criteria provide standards that measure academic and professional growth. The procedures ensure objective decisions based solely upon professional merit. Candidates may also refer to the *University of South Carolina Policies and Procedures*, the *Faculty Manual*, and the *University Committee on Tenure and Promotion Guide to Criteria and Procedures* for further information, including additional procedural guidelines, general qualifications for the rank, and the policy on nepotism.

I.   Procedures for Tenure and Promotion

The procedures below are intended to comply with the requirements of the *Faculty Manual*, which is the governing document in case of conflict. Furthermore, each required action must be completed in accordance with the tenure and promotion calendar issued by the Provost.

A. Unit Committees

The tenured faculty of the Department shall serve as the unit's tenure and promotions committee. The department chair may not serve on the committee. By April 15 of each year, the unit tenure and promotions committee shall elect a chair for the upcoming year and report the chair's name to the provost and Faculty Senate office.

The unit tenure and promotions committee may create subcommittees to assist the full committee in the performance of its work. Where possible, on matters other than consideration of a full professor for tenure or consideration of an associate professor for promotion to full professor, a subcommittee shall include both professors and associate professors. Unit tenure and promotions committee members of equal or higher rank may vote on a candidate for tenure but only faculty of higher rank may vote on a candidate for promotion.

In the event that any committee has fewer than five members, the department chair must notify the dean. The dean then consults with the members of the committee, the department chair, and the candidate before appointing additional tenured faculty of appropriate ranks from within the college to increase the size of the committee to at least five.

The committee constituted above is referred to as the *unit committee*. The chair of the unit committee ensures that the unit procedures are followed. In particular, the unit committee chair informs candidates of their eligibility, provides the candidates with copies of the tenure and promotion criteria and procedures, coordinates obtaining external review letters, conducts the meetings of the committee, communicates the general outcome of the unit vote to the candidates, and submits the results of the committee's deliberations to the department chair.

B. Eligibility

An untenured member of the faculty is eligible for tenure; assistant professors and associate professors are eligible for promotion. Each academic year, at times published by the Office of the Provost, eligible faculty members are considered for tenure or promotion. A faculty member in the next-to-last year of a probationary appointment must be considered for tenure or declare in writing an intention to leave the university at the end of the probationary period. Other eligible faculty may decline consideration for promotion or tenure by informing the unit committee chair in writing. This action does not prejudice future consideration of the faculty member for promotion or tenure.

Candidates for faculty appointments may be recommended for tenure on appointment. Time and accomplishments in a faculty position at another educational institution may be considered in evaluating a candidate for tenure or promotion.

A faculty member who is considered for promotion or tenure is called a *candidate*.

C. Notifications

Each year, at the time indicated in the tenure and promotion calendar published by the Office of the Provost, the unit committee chair informs candidates of the university's tenure and promotion calendar and writes to each eligible candidate asking whether the individual wishes to be considered. In addition, the unit committee chair verifies that each eligible candidate has been notified.

D. Documentation

The promotion and tenure file must be submitted in the format specified by the Office of the Provost. Except for the letters from external reviewers (see section I.E.3) and the summary of teaching evaluations (see section I.E.4), it is the responsibility of the candidate to obtain and maintain primary records and provide all documentation for the promotion or tenure file.

The candidate should provide a secondary file that should, at minimum, include:

- Reprints of publications and copies of manuscripts accepted or submitted for publications
- Teaching evaluations by students carried out on official forms and peer evaluations carried out according to established departmental guidelines.

A candidate may place any relevant material into the files at any time before the departmental vote.

E. Detailed Steps

A candidate in the next-to-last year of a probationary period must submit a file and be considered for tenure in the current year. At any time before the candidate's file is forwarded to the dean, a candidate who is not in the next-to-last year of a probationary appointment may decline in writing to be considered further. This action does not in any way prejudice further consideration of the candidate for promotion or tenure.

1. **Submitting the File**: A candidate requesting tenure or promotion must submit to the committee a completed file in the format published by the Office of the Provost. The file must be submitted electronically according to the calendar published by the Office of the Provost.

2. **Obtaining Outside Evaluations**: The unit committee chair requests evaluations of the candidate's record from at least five impartial scholars who:
   - have a national or an international reputation;
   - serve at peer or aspirant institutions outside the university;
   - work in a field closely related to that of the candidate;
   - hold equal or higher rank than the candidate is seeking.

   If a person can be shown to be one of the leading scholars in a particular field, that person may be used as an outside evaluator even if he or she is at an institution that is not peer or aspirant. Although at least five evaluators must be persons with academic affiliations, non-university specialists may be used as additional outside evaluators.

   Persons who have co-authored publications, collaborated on research, or been colleagues or advisors of the applicant normally should be excluded from consideration as outside evaluators. All evaluators must be asked to disclose any relationship or interaction with the applicant. The outside evaluators must be selected by the unit except as provided in the Faculty Manual for jointly appointed faculty.

   Resumes of the evaluators will be requested for inclusion in the file. All reviewers are selected by the unit committee chair. The replies, when received, are placed into the candidate's file by the unit committee chair.

3. **Summary and Evaluation of Teaching**: The unit committee chair will include in the file a summary and evaluation of the candidate's classroom teaching. This summary should give context to student evaluations of the candidate's classroom teaching by noting, for example: whether evaluations of a particular class historically have been low; in a multi-section course, how the faculty member's evaluation scores compare with those in the other sections; or whether poor evaluation scores are correlated to a faculty member's strict grading standards.

4. **Evaluating the File and Voting**: In accordance with the schedule published by the Office of the Provost, the unit committee reviews each candidate's file and the outside evaluations. The committee meets as a whole to evaluate the candidate's performance; the members then vote by secret ballot on whether the candidate is to be recommended for promotion or tenure. Each committee member must provide a written justification, based on the unit criteria, with the ballot. An affirmative vote from the unit committee requires a "yes" vote from at least 60% of its members. Abstentions are not counted in the total number of votes. Abstentions, which are strongly discouraged, must be clearly justified. The ballots and justifications are placed in the candidate's file.

5. **Reporting the Vote**: Within a day of the vote tally, the unit committee chair informs each candidate in writing of the vote by reporting it as affirmative or not affirmative; however, the specific vote count, justifications, and outside evaluations must not be revealed to the candidate.

   If the unit fails to give the candidate a favorable vote, the unit committee chair will notify the candidate promptly and shall, upon request by the candidate, without attributions, provide the candidate with a written synopsis of the discussion and an indication of the strength of the vote of the unit. Only if the candidate files a written appeal will the file be forwarded to the next level of review; i.e., department chair.

6. **Withdrawing a Request**: A candidate not in the next-to-last year of a probationary period may elect to withdraw from further consideration for tenure or promotion by informing the unit committee chair within one week of the vote notification. This action in no way prejudices further consideration of the candidate for promotion or tenure.

7. **Appealing an Unfavorable Vote**: A candidate may appeal the committee's recommendation by notifying the unit committee chair, who invites further written comments from all of the tenured faculty. In case of a negative vote by the unit committee, a letter indicating that the candidate is not recommended by the unit committee is placed into the candidate's file. The letter is drafted by a subcommittee of at most three members of the unit committee and is subject to approval by the unit committee. The letter must include the rationale for not supporting the candidate's request. The decision of the unit committee not to recommend the candidate in no way prejudices future consideration of the candidate for promotion or tenure. The candidate may elect to withdraw from further consideration or

request the file to be forwarded with the unfavorable unit vote. In the latter case, a letter from the candidate requesting that the file move forward must be included in the file.

8. **Faculty with Joint Appointments**: A candidate who has a secondary appointment in Computer Science and Engineering will be evaluated by a summary of faculty comments compiled by the unit committee chair. At least one outside reviewer will be selected by the Computer Science and Engineering unit committee chair. Accordingly, for a candidate who has a primary appointment in Computer Science and Engineering but a secondary appointment in another unit, a summary letter will be requested from the secondary unit and at least one reviewer will be selected by the chair of the secondary unit. All other issues involving joint appointments will be addressed in a Memorandum of Understanding between the primary and secondary unit.

II.   Criteria for Tenure and Promotion

Recommendations for promotion to or tenure at a professorial rank for a member of the faculty of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering are based upon the candidate's performance and promise of further accomplishments in three areas of academic endeavor: teaching, research, and service.

See the Faculty Manual for general definitions of the terms – Outstanding, Excellent, Good, Fair, and Unacceptable – used to rate a candidate's performance. See Appendix I for an explanation of the performance ratings in each area; these ratings are applicable to all tenure and promotion recommendations.

A. Promotion to and/or Tenure at the Rank of Associate Professor

Research excellence in junior faculty must be stressed. In consideration of tenure and/or promotion to associate professor, greater weight must be assigned to the research record of the candidate relative to teaching or service. The candidate for tenure and/or promotion must demonstrate at least **Excellent** performance in research, at least **Good** performance in both teaching and service, and progression towards establishing a national or international reputation in the field. Tenure requires evidence of consistency and durability of performance.

The normal time in rank at assistant professor is six years (request for tenure or promotion at the end of five years). The maximum probationary period may be extended according to University policy. An assistant professor may apply for promotion to associate professor without applying for tenure if the candidate is not in the penultimate year of the maximum probationary period. A candidate may not be tenured at the rank of assistant professor.

1. Research and Productive Scholarship

The candidate for tenure and/or promotion to associate professor in the Department must demonstrate at least **Excellent** performance in research and productive scholarship. The candidate must demonstrate a commitment to continued scholarship as evidenced by a research program that is based on the candidate's own initiative and that has advanced

significantly beyond, or is independent of, dissertation and postdoctoral research accomplishments. Performance in research and productive scholarship is evaluated based on the following required criteria.

Required Criteria
1. The candidate must present a record of original research or scholarship in recognized, peer-reviewed publications (i.e., in journals, symposia, and conferences) of national or international stature (see the Appendix II for an explanation of the importance and prestige of peer-reviewed conference papers in the Computer Science community). Both the quality and quantity of the work are considered in the evaluation, with an understanding that quantity may vary by discipline. Evaluation will be based on the candidate's entire professional record, but will emphasize performance since being hired at USC as a tenure-track faculty member.
2. There must be an independent assessment of the significance and quality of the published research. This is attested to by external peer review letters. At minimum, a majority of the overall external reviews must be positive.
3. The candidate must demonstrate the ability to sustain a high-quality research program. Research programs require effective management, appropriate personnel, and material resources. While these factors may vary depending upon the nature of the research, some success in securing competitive funding through external grants or contracts from government, industry, or private resources is generally expected. There must be sustained efforts to obtain funding through external grants and contracts.

An explanation of the performance ratings (outstanding, excellent, good, fair, and unacceptable) for research is given in Appendix I.

2. Teaching and Educational Activity
The candidate for tenure and/or promotion to associate professor in the Department must demonstrate at least **Good** performance in teaching. The candidate is expected to have taught effectively at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Performance in teaching is evaluated based on the following required criteria.

Required Criteria
1. Evaluation of teaching. Student and peer evaluations of teaching are employed as evidence of teaching performance; these evaluations are considered relative to other factors including class level and course enrollment. The unit committee chair will provide a summary and evaluation of the candidate's classroom teaching, which must be included in the candidate's promotion and/or tenure file.   This summary should give context to student evaluations of the candidate's classroom teaching by noting, for example: whether evaluations of a particular class historically have been low; in a multi-section course, how the faculty member's evaluation scores compare with those in the other sections; or whether poor evaluation scores are correlated to a faculty member's strict grading standards.

2. Student Supervision. The candidate must effectively advise graduate students in research. Evidence of meeting this requirement includes: (1) graduating Ph.D. students, (2) presenting the resultant research work at national and international conferences, and (3) publishing the resultant research in appropriate conferences and journals.

An explanation of the performance ratings (outstanding, excellent, good, fair, and unacceptable) for teaching is given in Appendix I.

3. Service
The candidate for tenure and/or promotion to associate professor in the Department must demonstrate at least **Good** performance in service. Certain administrative, professional, and community service functions are essential in any academic setting; the candidate is expected to serve effectively in these activities as necessary and as requested. Among these activities are service on departmental, college, or university committees; participation in student advisement; and other services in the academic and professional communities. While these activities are of secondary importance in the overall performance of junior faculty, willing and constructive service is essential for a positive recommendation for tenure and promotion.

An explanation of the performance ratings (outstanding, excellent, good, fair, and unacceptable) for service is given in Appendix I.

B. Promotion to or Tenure at the Rank of Professor
The rank of professor in the Department is awarded to those candidates who have achieved a level of academic stature and accomplishment worthy of general acknowledgment among peers at the national or international level. A professor is expected to enjoy the respect of colleagues in a specific discipline and to be an active leader in a field of research. A candidate for promotion or tenure at this level is evaluated on the basis of a combined record in the areas of research, teaching, and service.

The candidate must demonstrate at least **Excellent** performance in both research and teaching and at least **Good** performance in service, accompanied by evidence of national or international stature in the field. Evaluation of the candidate is based upon the entire professional record, but emphasizes performance after promotion to (or appointment at) associate professor. The criteria for tenure at the rank of professor are the same as those for promotion to professor with evidence of consistency and durability of performance.

Before being considered for promotion to (or being hired at) the rank of professor, a faculty member is expected to have at least nine years of academic or industrial experience in computer science, computer engineering, computer information systems, software engineering, or a closely related field.

1. Research and Productive Scholarship
The candidate for promotion to full professor must demonstrate at least **Excellent** performance in research and productive scholarship. Evaluation of the candidate is based upon the entire

professional record, but emphasizes performance after promotion to (or appointment at) associate professor. The candidate is expected to have attained national and/or international recognition and a favorable reputation among peers within a special area of research and scholarship. Performance in research and productive scholarship is evaluated based on the following required criteria.

Required Criteria
1. The candidate must attain national or international stature in the field as evidenced by a substantial record of original research or scholarship in recognized, peer-reviewed publications (i.e., in journals, symposia, and conferences) of national or international scope. Both the quality and quantity of the work are considered in the evaluation, with an understanding that quantity may vary by discipline. The record must be both sustained and continuing.
2. There must be an independent assessment of the significance and quality of the published research. This is attested to by external peer review letters. At minimum, a majority of the overall external reviews must be positive.
3. The candidate must demonstrate the ability to sustain a high-quality research program. There must be sustained efforts to obtain funding through external grants and contracts from government, industry, or private resources. Generation of funding through external grants or contracts is normally expected in order to demonstrate substantial achievement.

An explanation of the performance ratings (outstanding, excellent, good, fair, and unacceptable) for research is given in Appendix I.

2. Teaching and Educational Activity
The candidate for promotion to full professor must demonstrate at least **Excellent** performance in teaching. The candidate is expected to have taught effectively at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Performance in teaching is evaluated based on the following required criteria.

Required Criteria
1. Evaluation of teaching. Student and peer evaluations of teaching are employed as evidence of teaching performance; these evaluations are considered relative to other factors including class level and course enrollment. The unit committee chair will provide a summary and evaluation of the candidate's classroom teaching, which must be included in the candidate's promotion and/or tenure file.   This summary should give context to student evaluations of the candidate's classroom teaching.
2. Student Supervision. The candidate must effectively advise graduate students in research. Evidence of meeting this requirement includes: (1) graduating Ph.D. students, (2) presenting the resultant research work at national and international conferences, and (3) publishing the resultant research in appropriate conferences and journals.

An explanation of the performance ratings (outstanding, excellent, good, fair, and unacceptable) for teaching is given in Appendix I.

3. Service

The candidate for promotion to full professor must demonstrate at least **Good** performance in service. The candidate must possess a significant record of service in the department, college/university, and professional community. Among these activities are service on departmental, college, or university committees; participation in student advisement; and other services in the academic and professional communities.

An explanation of the performance ratings (outstanding, excellent, good, fair, and unacceptable) for service is given in Appendix I.

Appendix I
Explanation of Performance Ratings

Research
- **Outstanding**. The outstanding rating requires an established record of successfully funded research and high-quality conference and journal publications resulting from it. It also requires additional evidence (see the list below) of research and productive scholarship.
- **Excellent**. The excellent rating requires some success in securing research funding in addition to the requirements for the good rating given below.
- **Good**. The good rating requires a consistent record of high-quality conference and journal publications and attempts to secure externally funded research through submission of refereed proposals.
- **Fair**. The fair rating denotes that the candidate's scholarly output is deficient in quality or quantity - for example, a record that consists entirely of unrefereed or regional conference publications.
- **Unacceptable**. The unacceptable rating denotes no consistency in refereed publications and submission of proposals.

Evidence of outstanding research and productive scholarship includes:
- Development of computer software or hardware that achieves national recognition or usage.
- Invitations to present research seminars, lectures, or addresses.
- Invitations to participate in symposia.
- Authorship of review articles.
- Authorship or editorship of books or monographs.
- Awards or special recognition for research accomplishments.
- Citations in publications.

- Patents and copyrights.
- Supervision of post-doctoral fellows

Teaching
- **Outstanding**. An outstanding rating in teaching requires evidence that the candidate is among the best teachers in the department. It also requires clear evidence of additional sustained activities (see the list below) beyond the basic areas given in the good rating below.
- **Excellent**. An excellent rating requires performance that meets all of the requirements for a good teaching rating and some of the evidence for an outstanding teaching rating.
- **Good**. The requirements for a rating of good in teaching are that the candidate (1) covers material appropriate to the course, (2) has an effective classroom presentation, (3) provides for effective evaluation of the student's performance, and (4) effectively advises graduate students.
- **Fair**. A fair rating denotes performance that does not meet at least one of the required elements for the good rating.
- **Unacceptable**. An unsatisfactory rating denotes performance that does not meet any of the required elements for a good rating.

Evidence of outstanding teaching includes:
- Graduating M.S. students, presenting the resultant work at national and international conferences, and publishing the resultant research in appropriate conferences and journals.
- Receipt of awards or recognition for teaching excellence.
- Participation in curriculum development.
- Development of new or significantly revised courses.
- Authorship of textbooks, manuals, audio/visual aids, Internet-based and/or computer-based instructional materials, etc.
- Membership on M.S. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation committees.
- Grants or contracts for educational activities.
- Direction of independent study, senior thesis, or undergraduate research.
- Publications in the area of computer science and engineering education.
- Development of new techniques in teaching.
- Preparation of materials for program accreditation or review.
- Organization of training programs to improve the quality of K-12 teaching, particularly when externally funded.
- Organization of programs to improve the quality of undergraduate and/or graduate instruction, particularly when externally funded.

Service
- **Outstanding**. An outstanding rating in service requires evidence that the candidate's record is recognizably among the best in the unit. It requires clear evidence of

additional sustained service activities (see the list below), including leadership roles in the university and the profession.

- **Excellent**. An excellent rating requires performance that meets all of the requirements of good service and some of the requirements for outstanding service.
- **Good**. A good rating requires performance of all expected and requested service activities or functions in an effective and conscientious manner.
- **Fair**. A fair rating denotes performance of some, but not all, requested service activities or functions. This level of performance indicates that the candidate is not fulfilling all assigned duties and should strive for improvement.
- **Unacceptable**. An unacceptable rating denotes that the candidate does not perform any expected or requested service activities in an effective and conscientious manner.

Evidence of outstanding service include:
- Appointments or elections as chair of university-wide committees.
- Active leadership within the department, such as heading search committees, engaging in special projects, undertaking administrative functions, organizing professional meetings, or conducting in-depth studies.
- Appointment to and effective performance in compensated administrative posts within the department, college, or university.
- Editorship of journals.
- Service on grant review panels or editorial review boards.
- Service on conference program committees.
- Service on review committees at other universities.
- Service on public advisory panels, boards, or workshops.
- Consulting service, whether compensated or not.
- Professional service to the media as a scientific consultant or broadcast participant.
- Public educational activities, such as leading professional development seminars or courses.
- Service on committees or as an officer in professional organizations.
- Participation as an organizer of professional society conferences or institutes.
- K-12 outreach activities
- Activities to promote computer science and engineering for the public.

Appendix II
The Prestige of Conference Papers in Computer Science

In the field of computer science, publication in peer-reviewed conference proceedings is at least as prestigious as journal publication – sometimes more. The Association for Computing Machinery (the premier professional organization for computer scientists), the Computing Research Association, and the researchers in computer science universally agree that this is the case, as demonstrated by the following quotes:

- "A distinctive feature of CS publication is the importance of selective conferences and books. Journals do not necessarily carry more prestige." (Bertrand Meyer, Christine Choppy, Jørgen Staunstrup, Jan van Leeuwen in the Association for Computing Machinery's "*Research Evaluation for Computer Science*")

- "In computer science, papers in peer-reviewed conferences are accepted as high-quality scholarly articles. In fact, conference papers are arguably more prestigious than journal publications: oftentimes, conferences have higher standards and lower acceptance rates. [...] When evaluating a computer scientist for hiring, tenure, etc., a proper evaluation should be based primarily on peer-reviewed conference publications." (Ernst, memo on "*Conferences and Journals in Computer Science*")

- "Relying on journal publications as the sole demonstration of scholarly achievement, especially counting such publications to determine whether they exceed a prescribed threshold, ignores significant evidence of accomplishment in computer science and engineering. For example, conference publication is preferred in the field, and computational artifacts —software, chips, etc. —are a tangible means of conveying ideas and insight. Obligating faculty to be evaluated by this traditional standard handicaps their careers, and indirectly harms the field." (Patterson, Snyder, and Ullman in the Computing Research Association's Best Practice Memo for "*Evaluating Computer Scientists and Engineers For Promotion and Tenure*".)

References
- *"Research Evaluation for Computer Science",* By Bertrand Meyer, Christine Choppy, Jørgen Staunstrup, Jan van Leeuwen. Communications of the ACM, Vol. 52 No. 4, Pages 31-34 http://cacm.acm.org/magazines/2009/4/22954-research-evaluation-for-computer-science/fulltext
- *"Conferences and Journals in Computer Science"*, Michael Ernst, University of Washington https://homes.cs.washington.edu/~mernst/advice/conf-vs-journal-uscis.pdf
- "*Evaluating Computer Scientists and Engineers For Promotion and Tenure*", David Patterson, Lawrence Snyder, Jeffrey Ullman. Computing Research Association Best Practice Memos. http://cra.org/resources/bp-view/evaluating_computer_scientists_and_engineers_for_promotion_and_tenure/