

Scholarship Guidelines, Department of Mathematics

From the Faculty Handbook:

Professional activity and growth ranks second to excellence in teaching in the evaluation of faculty. Professional activity should be consistently apparent with successive appointments and be clearly evident at such key points as the granting of tenure and promotion to the rank of professor. The Personnel Committee will evaluate scholarly or creative work deemed to be professionally appropriate to each candidate's field, recognizing the variety of possible forms.

Several modes of professional activity are considered in the evaluation of professional activity, but the most important mode is evidence of the candidate's engagement in the intellectual life of his/her field of study beyond the boundaries of the campus community. While all items on the list below are valuable, the first is necessary:

Below is each list item with added guidelines from the department:

- a. Research and writing that appear in peer-reviewed publications, noteworthy performances or exhibitions, or other appropriate peer reviewed professional activities in the candidate's field(s) of study.

External reviews by recognized experts in the candidate's discipline of productions or exhibits occurring at Whitman shall qualify as peer reviewed measures of professional activity;

Guidelines: We expect our faculty to publish in reputable peer-reviewed journals or with well-established publishers of books. Publication includes print and electronic journal articles, chapters in books, entire books, invited and contributed papers that appear in conference proceedings, and contributions to mathematical literature intended for wider circulation (magazines, web encyclopedias, etc.). We realize that there is a distinction between lower level research written for a wide audience versus higher level research that is only accessible to a narrow audience; the first form can be difficult to achieve due to standards of exposition and interest while the latter often involves a high level of expertise and years of work. Since the rate of publication varies from one sub-discipline of mathematics to another as well as the nature of the work, we expect that the department will comment on the appropriateness of the candidate's rate of publication in letters of evaluation. If an article or book is co-authored, it is important for the department to know the level of involvement of the candidate in the development and writing of the work.

At the time of tenure, our faculty should have published several articles and shown that they have established a research agenda independent of their thesis adviser. If any work beyond the dissertation is co-authored, it must be clear that the candidate has made significant contributions to the work. For promotion to full professor, our faculty should show evidence of an ongoing successful program of professional development. The rate and form of the professional activity may change over time, but there should be evidence of steady work in this area.

- b. Peer-reviewed publication in related areas, including but not limited to, matters of pedagogy and curricular design;

Guidelines: There are various journals that publish articles related to teaching or short commentaries on pedagogical aspects of mathematics education. Publishing a textbook would also fit into this category.

- c. Non-peer reviewed publications and professional activity as defined in (a) and (b) above;

Guidelines: Serving as a referee for one or more journals, writing reviews of published articles for Math Reviews, editing journals or books, and writing professional reviews fit into this category. Depending on the nature of the work, some of these activities require a great deal of time. Being requested to referee or review an article or book reveals that a person has established a reputation in one or more fields of mathematics. Developing a formal set of class notes that is used at Whitman AND other institutions of higher learning may fit into this category since other users of the material can provide feedback. The candidate should check with the department concerning the merits of such a project. Professional consulting work done cooperatively with or on behalf of representatives from academia, industry, or government is also a valuable scholarly activity.

- d. Active involvement in professional organizations;

Guidelines: This item includes such activities as holding an office or being part of a committee in a professional organization. Since the nature of these activities can vary a great deal, a candidate should make clear what the duties entail and check with the department as to their value. Sponsoring a conference here at Whitman or being an organizer for a session at a national meeting are also valuable contributions in this area.

- e. Participation in professional meetings and conferences, including presentations made with student co-authors;

Attending professional meetings, presenting papers at meetings or conferences, and chairing or organizing special sessions at professional meetings are important as a support to other scholarly activities.

Scholarship involving students: Creative research with students is a valuable scholarly activity. Ideally, a research project is one in which the collaborators cooperatively address mathematical questions whose answers are unknown and otherwise unavailable to them. Opportunities for this sort of activity are possible through independent studies or projects during the school year or summer grants (such as Perry scholarships). Another possibility is for a faculty member to be involved with a summer REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) at another institution.

It is important to note that while the apprenticeship model for research is sometimes viable for mathematical research, more often than not the theoretical and cumulative nature of the subject makes this a less useful model for mathematics than it is for other scientific disciplines. Moreover, not all research programs are conducive to involving students since the topics may be completely inaccessible to undergraduates. The department acknowledges that some faculty may not choose to or be able to involve students in their research. In this regard, we feel that the pursuit of secondary fields of

scholarly interest is particularly noteworthy when it will result in students being more effectively engaged in our research even if this pursuit temporarily slows the rate of peer-reviewed publication.

- f. The writing and submission of proposals for external grants.

Guidelines: Our members have occasionally received grants for equipment and the development of new courses. We encourage our faculty to seek such grants when appropriate. An activity such as establishing a summer REU at Whitman would be particularly noteworthy.

The remaining points from the Faculty Handbook:

The Personnel Committee will also consider activities, such as the development of new areas of expertise in the discipline, that may not bring the candidate into the larger intellectual dialog of his or her field, as well as interdisciplinary professional activities. The judgment of the Committee will not be based solely on the quantity of the candidate's professional activity, but also will consider its quality, breadth, and contributions to the candidate's teaching and the mission of the College. The Personnel Committee will consider the candidate's written statement, letters from the candidate's peers both within and without the College, and direct examples of the candidate's professional activity.