



**Required Unit RTP Criteria Elements and Guidance on Unit RTP Criteria Revision –  
Handbook Changes**

**RES 252632**

FAC

**RESOLVED:** That the Handbook sections in this resolution replace or amend sections 305.3.1, 305.3.4, 305.4.2.4, 305.4.2.5, 305.4.2.8., and 305.4.2.9.

**RESOLVED:** That Unit RTP Criteria shall be written and maintained in a manner that supports evaluation across the full faculty career progression, including retention, tenure, promotion, early advancement, and post-tenure review. In particular, criteria shall be written with enough clarity and specificity to support evaluation for:

1. Retention decisions of temporary faculty;
2. Retention decisions during the probationary period;
3. Tenure and promotion decisions following the normal probationary timeline (six years);
4. Post-tenure promotion following the normal time in rank (five years);
5. Early tenure and promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor;
6. Early promotion from Associate Professor to Professor; and
7. Post-tenure review.

**RESOLVED:** Unit RTP Criteria should be written with sufficient clarity and stability to promote consistent professional growth over time and to prevent shifting or evolving expectations during the probationary period.

**RESOLVED:** For the purposes of faculty evaluation and the Unit RTP or PTR Criteria, the terms “acceptable,” “satisfactory,” “meets expectations,” and “essential” may be used interchangeably to describe the minimum level of performance required in the areas of teaching or professional performance, scholarly or creative activity, and professionally related service. These terms reflect the baseline standards necessary for retention of temporary faculty, retention of

probationary faculty, and the award of tenure and promotion following the normal probationary period. They do not represent aspirational or exemplary levels of performance, but rather the fundamental professional expectations required for continued appointment as a faculty member. Failure to meet these standards indicates that a faculty member has not satisfied the essential professional responsibilities of the position and should result in non-retention, denial of tenure or promotion, or separation from the university consistent with applicable policies and procedures.

**RESOLVED:** That clarifying Unit RTP Criteria is intended to promote continued professional growth and engagement in teaching or professional performance, scholarly or creative activity, and professionally related service, while also supporting transparent and consistent evaluation.

**RESOLVED:** That the Academic Senate reaffirms that early tenure and promotion should be rare, but attainable when faculty demonstrate clearly defined exceptional performance.

**RESOLVED:** That the Academic Senate acknowledges that current policy prevents exceptional faculty from being considered for early tenure and/or promotion in units that lack clearly articulated criteria for exceptional performance, thereby limiting opportunities for advancement and incentives for excellence.

**RESOLVED:** That Unit RTP Criteria addressing scholarly or creative activity shall reflect discipline-appropriate standards of quality and integrity, including holistic evaluation practices consistent with professional norms.

**RESOLVED:** Units missing criteria for exceptional performance in teaching, scholarly or creative activities, and professionally related service shall revise their Unit RTP Criteria to include criteria for exceptional performance in these areas.

**RESOLVED:** Units missing post-tenure review criteria shall revise their Unit RTP Criteria to include post-tenure review criteria.

**RESOLVED:** That a detailed guide with illustrative examples be included as an attachment to this resolution to assist units in revising Unit RTP Criteria, with emphasis on defining acceptable and exceptional

performance in teaching, scholarly or creative activities, and professionally related service, and in articulating post-tenure review expectations.

**RESOLVED:** That the guidance document attached to this resolution is advisory in nature and intended to support units in developing discipline-appropriate criteria; it shall not be interpreted as prescriptive or restrictive.

**RESOLVED:** That compliance with these requirements shall be incorporated into the regular five-year review cycle of Unit RTP Criteria as described in Section 305.4.2.5.

**RESOLVED:** That a copy of this resolution and its attachments shall be maintained on the Faculty Affairs webpage.

**RESOLVED:** That a copy of the attached guidance document (“Guidance for Developing Unit RTP Criteria”) shall be included as an Appendix in the University Handbook.

**RESOLVED:** That the Academic Senate recommends the Office of the Provost, Faculty Affairs, and/or the College Deans ensure that Units are in compliance with the Handbook, which states that “Unit RTP criteria shall be formally reviewed at least once every five (5) years.”

**RESOLVED:** That Unit RTP Criteria shall be maintained in a manner that preserves stable expectations for faculty within each rank while ensuring that evaluation standards remain reasonably current with evolving disciplinary norms, institutional priorities, and external accountability expectations; accordingly, the periodic review of Unit RTP Criteria and the limitations on the age of criteria used for evaluation are intended to balance fairness to individual faculty with the need for contemporary and relevant evaluation standards.

**RESOLVED:** The following changes be made to the University Handbook (additions in underline, deletions in ~~striketrough~~).

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### **305.3 Promotion**

#### **305.3.1 Performance Review for Promotion of Faculty**

Promotion is the advancement of a probationary or tenured faculty who holds a teaching faculty, librarian, or counselor rank to a higher rank. Faculty shall be subject to a performance review for the purpose of being awarded promotion, pursuant to the performance review provisions in Section 305.5.

Elapsed time or number of years in rank will not of itself constitute reason for or against promotion, and a faculty's performance may be judged **acceptable or** satisfactory for a given rank without necessarily warranting promotion to a higher rank.

#### **305.3.2 Promotion of Probationary Faculty**

Probationary faculty shall be considered for promotion at the same time they are reviewed for tenure. Probationary faculty shall not ordinarily be promoted before the end of the normal six (6)-year probationary period. Probationary faculty shall not be promoted beyond the rank of associate professor.

#### **305.3.3 Promotion of Tenured Faculty**

Promotion of tenured faculty shall ordinarily occur at the beginning of the sixth year after appointment to their current rank or classification. Promotion of tenured faculty occurs within the following guidelines and restrictions.

- a. Tenured faculty wishing to undergo review for promotion shall notify the Office of the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs (P&VPAA) in writing by November 1 of their intention to undergo performance review for the purpose of promotion during the Fall review. Tenured faculty who do not notify the Office of the P&VPAA by that date will be ineligible to undergo review for promotion that year.
- b. The performance review for promotion purposes occurs in the Fall review during the academic year in which the tenured faculty requests the review for promotion.

#### **305.3.4 Early Promotion of Probationary and Tenured Faculty**

The President may promote probationary faculty before the end of the normal six (6)-year probationary period or in the case of tenured faculty before the lapse of six years since the initial promotion. Early promotion should be rare and occurs only if faculty have compiled a record of discipline-specific exceptional performance while at California State University, Bakersfield in teaching (or the equivalent in the case of librarians and counselors), scholarly/creative activities, and in ~~professionally-related~~ **professionally related** service.

- a. Well defined and specific departmental expectations for the level of “exceptional” performance in teaching, scholarly/creative activities, and service shall be included in the unit RTP criteria. These criteria shall significantly exceed the typical criteria and shall be of significant rigor that most faculty within the unit who qualify for promotion and/or tenure would not meet exceptional criteria for early promotion and/or tenure. Such criteria shall be regularly reviewed by the unit.
- b. Early tenure and/or promotion of probationary and early promotion of tenured faculty should be a rare event. **Eligibility for early promotion shall not be based on a minimum number of years in rank, but on demonstrated exceptional performance.** The request for early tenure and/or promotion may be initiated either by the probationary faculty member or by the department unit committee. ~~If the request is initiated by the probationary faculty member such request may not occur before the fourth year of the ordinary six-year probationary period. Requests initiated by the unit committee are under no such restriction.~~ In either case the candidate and/or the unit committee must document how the faculty member meets the department’s elaborated definition of “exceptional” performance.
- c. If no criteria for “exceptional” performance for early tenure and/or promotion exists within unit RTP criteria, then requests for early promotion and/or tenure shall not be considered.

#### **305.4.2.4 Unit RTP Criteria**

Units may have different perspectives, priorities, or procedures in evaluating the performance or estimating the promise of their members. Without altering the scope of the three areas in 305.4.2.1, 305.4.2.2, and 305.4.2.3 above, units shall interpret and elaborate the three areas in order to assess the level and quality of a unit member’s performance. The unit RTP criteria shall be used at all levels of review for a given faculty.

~~Faculty under consideration for retention, tenure, and promotion shall have the option of a performance review under either the unit RTP criteria operative at the time of their hiring or under any subsequent revision of the unit RTP criteria during the probationary period.~~

**A. Faculty undergoing retention, tenure, promotion, or post-tenure review shall normally be evaluated under the Unit RTP Criteria in effect at the beginning of their appointment in their current rank.**

##### **1. Probationary Faculty**

- i. **For faculty in the probationary period, the applicable Unit RTP Criteria shall normally be those in effect at the**

time of the initial probationary appointment, unless the faculty member elects in writing to be evaluated under a subsequent revision adopted during the probationary period.

**2. Election of Subsequently Revised Criteria**

- i. A faculty member may elect in writing to be evaluated under any subsequent revision of the Unit RTP Criteria adopted during their appointment in that rank.

**3. Currency of Unit RTP Criteria**

- i. Faculty outside of the probationary period may use the Unit RTP Criteria in effect at the time of their most recent promotion in rank for up to seven (7) years in that rank, and shall not be required to adopt revised criteria prior to the completion of that period.
- ii. After seven (7) years from the faculty member's most recent promotion in rank, subsequent reviews shall use Unit RTP Criteria that were approved and in effect at the time of the faculty member's most recent review.
- iii. This provision (i.e., currency of Unit RTP Criteria) shall go into effect in the 2026–2027 academic year and shall apply prospectively. For faculty in rank as of the effective date, the seven (7) year period described above shall be measured prospectively from that date, and such faculty shall not be required to adopt revised Unit RTP Criteria prior to the completion of that period.

**4. Purpose**

- i. These provisions are intended to preserve stable expectations for faculty within each rank, while also ensuring that evaluation standards remain reasonably current with evolving disciplinary norms, institutional priorities, and external accountability expectations.

**B. For each of the three areas outlined in sections 305.4.2.1, 305.4.2.2, and 305.4.2.3, as applicable, units shall define criteria for (a) acceptable/satisfactory performance and (b) exceptional performance.**

1. Acceptable or satisfactory performance shall be required for the award of tenure and promotion of an assistant professor to the rank associate professor, and for the promotion of an associate professors to the rank of professor.

2. Exceptional performance in the areas outlined in 305.4.2.1, 305.4.2.2., and 305.4.2.3, as applicable, shall be required for early tenure and promotion of probationary faculty or early promotion of tenured faculty (see 305.3.4).

C. Unit RTP Criteria shall be written with enough clarity and specificity to support evaluation for:

1. Retention decisions of temporary faculty;
2. Retention decisions during the probationary period;
3. Tenure and promotion decisions following the normal probationary timeline (six years);
4. Post-tenure promotion following the normal time in rank (five years);
5. Early tenure and promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor;
6. Early promotion from Associate Professor to Professor; and
7. Post-tenure review.

To be retained during the probationary period, a faculty member is required to demonstrate progress toward tenure such that a positive tenure decision is likely.

D. Each unit shall define (a) criteria for tenure and promotion from assistant professor to associate professor (or equivalent ranks for counselors and librarians), and (b) promotion from associate professor to professor (or equivalent ranks for counselors and librarians).

Further each unit shall define (c) criteria for early tenure and promotion from assistant professor to associate professor (or equivalent ranks for counselors and librarians), and (d) criteria for early promotion from associate professor to professor (or equivalent ranks for counselors and librarians).

E. Post-tenure review is critical for maintaining and improving a tenured faculty member's effectiveness (see 306.3). Therefore, each unit shall include clearly articulated criteria for post-tenure review. These criteria should reflect the ongoing professional expectations of tenured faculty, including continued effectiveness in teaching and meaningful engagement in professionally related service.

**Tenured faculty are also expected to maintain meaningful engagement in scholarly or creative activity appropriate to their discipline, rank, and assignment. Consistent with University policy on faculty workload and professional responsibilities, such engagement shall be understood as participation in the ongoing scholarly or creative process rather than as a requirement to produce specific outputs within a fixed period of time.**

**For post-tenure review conducted in the absence of an application for promotion, evaluations shall focus on acceptable performance in teaching or professional performance and service, and on evidence of continued professional engagement across all areas of responsibility. Scholarly or creative activity shall be evaluated in a developmental and contextual manner, recognizing that contributions may take a variety of forms and may occur across extended timelines.**

**Engagement in scholarly or creative activity is expected for all tenured faculty; however, the absence of specific scholarly or creative outputs within a given review period shall not, in itself, constitute unsatisfactory performance for post-tenure review.**

- F. Unit RTP criteria shall be sufficiently clear and specific to provide faculty, particularly those in the probationary period, with stable and transparent expectations that guide professional development over time. Criteria should support progressive growth and improvement and should not function in a manner that effectively alters performance expectations during an ongoing probationary period.**

**Unit criteria should recognize that excellence across teaching, scholarship or creative activity, and service represents the strongest case for advancement and professional distinction, and should not be structured in a way that allows for sustained neglect of any of these core areas of faculty responsibility.**

#### **305.4.2.5 Revision of Unit RTP Criteria**

Unit RTP criteria shall be formally reviewed at least once every five (5) years. Any faculty may propose changes in unit RTP criteria at any time. **As part of this review, Unit RTP criteria may be revised and updated as appropriate, or formally reaffirmed to indicate continued alignment with disciplinary norms, institutional priorities, and existing policy.**

After approval by a majority vote of all tenured and probationary faculty, changes in the unit RTP criteria shall be forwarded to the ~~school dean~~ **college dean** and the P&VPAA **for review for alignment with the Collective Bargaining Agreement and University Handbook**. Revised RTP criteria cannot apply to an RTP cycle already underway.

Given the critical importance of the RTP process, the P&VPAA, ~~school~~ **college** deans, and units are encouraged to make every attempt to resolve amicably any differences of opinion concerning the proposed criteria. In the event that the differences cannot be resolved, the P&VPAA shall request the University Review Committee to arbitrate and to determine a resolution.

#### **305.4.2.8 Evaluation of Scholarly or Creative Activity**

Candidates for tenure or promotion shall demonstrate substantive and sustained contributions to knowledge in the discipline. Candidates for tenure **and promotion** shall demonstrate these contributions via works that have received favorable peer review from individuals outside of CSUB.

In all instances, quality of work shall be considered the primary criterion for evaluating scholarly or creative activity.

**Scholarly and creative activity is a core professional expectation of tenure-track and tenured faculty. Unit RTP criteria shall recognize that sustained engagement in scholarship or creative work is essential to maintaining disciplinary expertise, supporting teaching effectiveness, and contributing to the mission of the University. Criteria should encourage continued contributions while recognizing that scholarly activity may take multiple forms across career stages.**

**Scholarly and creative activity should not be displaced by service commitments or administrative responsibilities, and units should structure expectations to ensure that faculty are supported in maintaining active intellectual engagement appropriate to rank, assignment, and discipline.**

**Scholarly and creative activity may include a wide range of contributions beyond traditional peer-reviewed works, including but not limited to mentorship of student research and creative projects, applied scholarship, professional engagement, and other discipline-relevant intellectual contributions.**

### 305.4.2.9 Evaluation of ~~Professionally-Related~~ Professionally Related Service

Faculty members shall prioritize their activities so service does not interfere significantly with teaching or scholarly or creative activity. Faculty members shall document active service to the department that includes, at a minimum, collaborative participation in department decision making.

**Service expectations shall be appropriate to rank, experience, and assignment, recognizing that early-career faculty may have more limited service responsibilities while developing their teaching and scholarly profiles.**

**Associate Professors and Professors shall document significant and sustained service to multiple areas, including the school (if applicable), the college, the university, the university system, a professional association, and the community. As faculty advance in rank, service contributions are expected to reflect increasing leadership, responsibility, or broader institutional and professional engagement.**

**Professionally related service is a core professional responsibility and shall be evaluated as a cumulative body of work over time rather than as a uniform annual obligation. Unit RTP criteria should recognize both acceptable and exceptional service contributions while ensuring that expectations for service, teaching, and scholarly or creative activity remain appropriately balanced.**

~~Associate Professors and Professors shall also document significant and sustained service to two or more of the following: the school, the university, the university system, a professional association, or the community.~~

The department or equivalent unit criteria shall determine whether service learning, if included, is evaluated as teaching or as service.

**Service expectations should be structured in a manner that encourages sustained participation while maintaining balance across teaching, scholarship or creative activity, and service responsibilities.**

## Appendix G: CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE RTP FILE (WPAF)

### F. Current Unit RTP Criteria

- 1) After consultation with the Department /Program Chair or Director, the faculty shall place in the file a copy of the unit RTP criteria being used for the current RTP cycle.
- ~~2) The unit RTP criteria may be those in effect at the time the faculty was hired or any subsequent revision, including those in effect at the beginning of the current RTP review cycle. The faculty has the responsibility and authority to make the choice.~~
- 3) **The Unit RTP Criteria used for evaluation shall normally be those in effect at the beginning of the faculty member's appointment in their current rank. The faculty member may elect in writing to be evaluated under any subsequent revision of the Unit RTP Criteria adopted during their appointment in that rank. Faculty outside of the probationary period may use the Unit RTP Criteria in effect at the time of their most recent promotion in rank for up to seven (7) years in that rank and shall not be required to adopt revised criteria prior to the completion of that period. After seven (7) years from the faculty member's most recent promotion in rank, subsequent reviews shall use Unit RTP Criteria that were approved and in effect at the time of the faculty member's most recent review. Unit RTP Criteria shall not be applied in a manner that alters evaluation expectations within an established review cycle.**
- 2) The unit RTP criteria in the RTP file shall be used by all levels of review for that RTP review cycle.

### **RATIONALE:**

This resolution responds directly to Academic Senate Referral #32, which requested that the Faculty Affairs Committee review and clarify Handbook language related to Unit RTP Criteria, Periodic Evaluation, and Post-Tenure Review, including the development of clearer definitions of “exceptional” performance for early promotion and the creation of a checklist to assist units in revising their criteria. This resolution also partially responds to Referral #43, which calls for review of RSCA reports. The 2025 FAC-4-RSCA Report on Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity recommends rigorous maintenance of requirements for scholarship and creative activities, as well as “clear language in the handbook” about “predatory, for-profit, vanity, and self-publish options” (pp. 27-28).

This resolution responds to an updated, revised version of referral #32 that indicated that the Faculty Affairs Committee should review the issue of currency and applicability of Unit RTP Criteria.

The retention, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review processes serve not only as evaluative mechanisms but also as developmental structures intended to support continued professional growth and engagement across the full span of a faculty career. Faculty are expected to remain actively engaged in teaching or professional performance, scholarly or creative activity, and professionally related service, and Unit RTP Criteria play a central role in defining expectations in ways that are discipline-appropriate, transparent, and equitable.

This resolution creates Handbook language and guidance on retention decisions of probationary faculty, such that “to be retained during the probationary period, a faculty member is required to demonstrate progress toward tenure such that a positive tenure decision is likely”. We acknowledge CSU Channel Islands for this language (CSU Channel Islands, Policy SP 17-08, Effective Fall 2018, <https://policy.csuci.edu/sp/17/sp-17-08.htm>)

This resolution strengthens existing Handbook language by ensuring that Unit RTP Criteria clearly articulate expectations for acceptable and exceptional performance in all three areas of evaluation, including criteria for early promotion and post-tenure review. The intent is not to standardize disciplinary standards, but to ensure that units provide sufficient clarity to support consistent, informed, and fair evaluation across all stages of review, including retention decisions, tenure and promotion following the normal probationary timeline, early advancement based on exceptional performance, post-tenure promotion, and post-tenure review.

The RTP process is intended to encourage sustained professional growth and meaningful engagement over time. Teaching effectiveness, scholarly or creative contributions, and professionally related service are not static expectations limited to early career stages; rather, they represent continuing professional responsibilities that evolve across career trajectories. Clear unit criteria help faculty understand how to develop their work in ways that align with disciplinary norms and institutional expectations; while also helping review committees and administrators make thoughtful, contextualized judgments.

Clear and stable unit criteria are particularly important during the probationary period. Faculty must be able to rely on articulated standards when planning their teaching, scholarly or creative activity, and service commitments. When criteria lack clarity or appear to shift during the probationary period, faculty may experience uncertainty that undermines professional planning and development. By encouraging units to articulate expectations with sufficient specificity and stability, this resolution promotes fairness, transparency, and consistent growth rather than ad hoc or evolving standards.

The addition of guidance encouraging holistic evaluation of scholarship, recognition of diverse scholarly and creative contributions, and alignment with principles such as those articulated in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment supports a more nuanced and discipline-sensitive approach to evaluating scholarly impact. At the same time, emphasizing balanced engagement across teaching, scholarship or creative activity, and service reinforces the principle that excellence in faculty work is strongest when it reflects meaningful contributions across multiple areas.

Similarly, the inclusion of post-tenure review criteria within Unit RTP documents helps ensure that expectations for continued engagement remain transparent and developmental rather than episodic or unclear. Post-tenure review is intended to support continued effectiveness and professional vitality, not to impose rigid productivity models. Recognizing that scholarly and creative activity may take different forms over time helps units evaluate faculty contributions in context while still maintaining expectations for continued professional involvement.

This resolution is also intentionally aligned with Academic Senate Resolution 252633 on Faculty Workload Clarification. That resolution distinguishes between ongoing engagement in research, scholarship, and creative activity and the production of specific scholarly outputs within fixed time periods. The revisions to post-tenure review language in this policy reflect that distinction by affirming that tenured faculty are expected to remain meaningfully engaged in scholarly or creative activity, while recognizing that such engagement

may occur across extended timelines and should not be reduced to rigid productivity expectations. This alignment helps ensure consistency across University policy, reinforces the developmental purpose of post-tenure review, and supports equitable and discipline-appropriate evaluation practices.

Concisely, a tenured faculty member without peer-reviewed RSCA outputs (as defined by Unit RTP Criteria) should not expect to be promoted to the next rank (e.g., Associate Professor to Professor).

Additionally, the University Handbook and Collective Bargaining Agreement make it clear that engagement in RSCA (e.g., development of scholarly or creative projects; data collection, analysis, and interpretation; preparation or revision of manuscripts or creative works; submission of grant or fellowship proposals; presentation of work at professional conferences; mentorship of student research or creative activity; and participation in scholarly or professional communities) is an expectation of all tenure-track and tenured faculty. Consistent failure to engage in RSCA is not aligned with professional expectations, including expectations for post-tenure review. However, if promotion is not considered, the absence of specific scholarly outputs within a given review period, in and of itself, does not constitute a failure to meet post-tenure review expectations.

Maintaining currency of the RTP criteria is essential. The University Handbook indicates that “Unit RTP criteria shall be formally reviewed at least once every five (5) years”, reflecting the expectation that evaluation standards evolve over time in response to disciplinary developments, institutional priorities, and external accountability requirements. At the same time, faculty members seeking tenure and promotion must be able to rely on stable and predictable expectations during the periods in which they are evaluated. In particular, the criteria governing evaluation should not be changed once a faculty member has entered the probationary period or begun serving in rank as an Associate Professor (or equivalent) in a way that alters the expectations under which their work is evaluated. In other words, the rules governing evaluation should not be changed once the faculty member is already “in the game.”

These two principles—protecting fairness and stability for individual faculty while maintaining reasonably current evaluation standards—can come into tension if older criteria remain in effect for long periods of time (for example, eight years or more). When such tension arises, the fairness and integrity of the evaluation process should be prioritized. At the same time, policy mechanisms such as periodic review of Unit RTP Criteria and reasonable limits on the age of criteria used for evaluation can help ensure that institutional standards remain current without altering expectations mid-career stage.

Maintaining reasonably current RTP criteria is particularly important when academic programs undergo external accreditation or periodic program review. Accrediting bodies often update expectations regarding assessment practices, scholarly engagement, professional qualifications, or community impact. For example, if a program’s accreditor introduces new expectations related to evidence-based practice, inclusive pedagogy, or student learning assessment, the unit may revise its RTP criteria to reflect those standards. Without a mechanism to ensure that evaluation criteria remain reasonably current, faculty members could potentially seek promotion under guidelines adopted long before those accreditation expectations were incorporated into the program’s standards. Establishing a limited sunset period—such as seven years—helps ensure that RTP criteria used for evaluation remain aligned with contemporary professional expectations while preserving fairness and stability within each rank.

Maintaining reasonably current criteria also supports equity and consistency across faculty cohorts. When evaluation criteria remain in effect for very long periods of time, situations may arise in which faculty members are evaluated under substantially different expectations than those applied to earlier generations of faculty in the same unit. Establishing reasonable limits on the age of RTP criteria helps ensure that expectations for advancement remain broadly comparable across cohorts and that faculty participate in evaluation processes under standards that reflect contemporary disciplinary and institutional expectations.

Further, establishing a sunset period may encourage tenured faculty to strive for and achieve promotion within a seven-year period. Current Handbook language indicates that “promotion of tenured faculty shall ordinarily occur at the beginning of the sixth year after appointment to their current rank or classification” (section 305.3.3), indicating that this is a normative expectation.

An illustrative example helps clarify how these provisions operate in practice.

- A faculty member hired as an Assistant Professor in Fall 2020 would normally be evaluated for retention and tenure under the Unit RTP Criteria in effect at the time of hire, ensuring that expectations remain stable throughout the probationary period. If that faculty member earns tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in AY 2026–2027, the applicable criteria would reset to those in effect at the beginning of their appointment as Associate Professor.
- If the department later revises its Unit RTP Criteria, the faculty member may elect to be evaluated under those revisions. When applying for promotion to Professor, the faculty member may not rely on criteria that are more than seven years older than the RTP cycle in which the review occurs.

This approach preserves stable expectations within each career stage while ensuring that Unit RTP Criteria remain reasonably current over time.

Overall, this resolution is designed to strengthen clarity, transparency, and consistency while preserving disciplinary autonomy. By encouraging units to articulate expectations more clearly, this policy supports faculty in planning their professional development, supports reviewers (e.g., Unit RTP Committees, Deans, the University Review Committee, the Provost) in making informed evaluations, and reinforces accountability structures that promote continued growth, engagement, and excellence across the academic career.

***Attachments: Guidance for Developing Unit RTP Criteria***

**Distribution List:**

President  
Provost and VP for Academic Affairs  
AVP for Faculty Affairs  
University Review Committee  
College Deans  
Dean of Libraries  
Department Chairs  
General Faculty

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Approved by the Academic Senate: March 26, 2026  
Sent to the President: April 10, 2026

Revised Resolution Approved by the Academic Senate: April 16, 2026  
Sent to the President: April 28, 2026  
President Approved: June 16, 2026

## **Guidance for Developing Unit RTP Criteria**

*Adopted by the Academic Senate on April 16, 2026, RES 252632*

This guidance is intended to support units in developing clear, discipline-appropriate Unit RTP Criteria that define acceptable and exceptional performance across teaching or professional performance, scholarly or creative activity, and professionally related service. Units retain primary responsibility for determining the standards, expectations, and forms of evidence that are most appropriate to their disciplines, professional norms, institutional roles, and the standards, expectations, and resources relevant at California State University, Bakersfield.

These areas will necessarily be interpreted and adapted for non-instructional faculty, including counselors and librarians, whose primary responsibilities may center on professional performance rather than classroom teaching.

The examples provided in this document are illustrative and are intended to support reflection and development; they should not be interpreted as required elements, minimum thresholds, or restrictive definitions.

Unit RTP Criteria shall be sufficiently detailed to allow for consistent and informed evaluation across the full faculty career progression. In particular, probationary faculty should be able to rely on the published criteria as stable benchmarks for professional development throughout the probationary period. In particular, criteria should be written with enough clarity and specificity to support evaluation for:

1. Retention decisions of temporary faculty;
2. Retention decisions during the probationary period;
3. Tenure and promotion decisions following the normal probationary timeline (six years);
4. Post-tenure promotion following the normal time in rank (five years);
5. Early tenure and promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor;
6. Early promotion from Associate Professor to Professor; and
7. Post-tenure review.

Criteria should provide a clear and substantive framework for distinguishing between acceptable/satisfactory performance and exceptional performance in each of the three areas of evaluation so that faculty, review committees, and administrators have a shared understanding of expectations at each stage of review. While criteria should be sufficiently detailed to guide evaluation, units

should preserve flexibility to account for disciplinary differences, varied faculty assignments, and the evolving nature of academic work. The goal is not to create rigid formulas, but to ensure that expectations are transparent, interpretable, and applicable across the range of review processes that occur over the course of a faculty member's career.

## **Teaching**

Unit RTP criteria should clearly describe what constitutes acceptable/satisfactory teaching and what constitutes exceptional teaching, using definitions and forms of evidence appropriate to the discipline. Because teaching is a primary function of faculty, evaluation of teaching effectiveness should rely on multiple measures that together provide a comprehensive view of a faculty member's instructional practice and contributions to student learning. Evidence of teaching effectiveness may include course design, instructional innovation, curriculum development, assessment practices, mentoring of students, and contributions to student success. Units are encouraged to consider evidence reflecting the full range of instructional environments within their disciplines, including classroom, laboratory, clinical, studio, field-based, and online contexts.

Consistent with University policy, evaluation of teaching should include review of course materials and instructional artifacts that demonstrate the structure, preparation, and intentional design of courses. Such materials may include syllabi, assignments, assessments, grading practices, instructional resources, and the alignment between learning objectives, instructional activities, and evaluation methods. Units may also consider evidence of the effective use of learning management systems and related instructional technologies to support communication, organization of course content, accessibility, and student engagement.

Student opinion of teaching, including the Student Opinion on Curriculum and Instruction (SOCl), is a required component of the evaluation process and provides useful information about the student experience in courses. However, student opinion data should be interpreted in context and considered as only one of multiple measures of teaching effectiveness. Consistent with University policy, SOCl's should not be given greater weight than other measures of teaching performance, and reviewers should focus on patterns or trends across courses and review cycles rather than isolated scores or comments. Research indicates that student evaluations may be influenced by factors unrelated to instructional quality and may reflect potential biases. For this reason, Unit RTP criteria should

encourage careful and professional interpretation of SOCI data and emphasize the importance of evaluating teaching through a holistic review of multiple sources of evidence.

Additional evidence of teaching effectiveness may include peer observations of teaching, self-reflective statements about instructional practice, formative assessment of teaching and learning, and evidence of engagement with pedagogical development. Reflective statements and teaching philosophies may help reviewers understand a faculty member's instructional goals, responsiveness to feedback, and ongoing efforts to improve teaching practice. Participation in teaching workshops, learning communities, or other professional development activities may also demonstrate a sustained commitment to improving teaching effectiveness.

Examples of exceptional teaching may include sustained instructional innovation, development of new courses or programs, leadership in pedagogical initiatives, development of materials used by others, engagement in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, mentorship of student research or creative work, teaching awards, or other contributions that demonstrate a particularly strong impact on student learning or the educational mission of the unit. Units should determine which indicators of teaching effectiveness and distinction best align with disciplinary values and instructional practices. These examples are intended to illustrate possible forms of evidence rather than prescribe specific requirements.

### **Scholarly or Creative Activity**

Unit RTP criteria should define acceptable and exceptional scholarly or creative activity in ways that are appropriate to the discipline and consistent with professional standards. Scholarship and creative activity are core professional expectations of tenure-track and tenured faculty, and unit criteria should recognize sustained engagement in intellectual and creative work as an important part of maintaining disciplinary expertise, supporting teaching effectiveness, and contributing to the mission of the University. Because the nature of scholarship varies widely across fields, units should identify the types of contributions that are most meaningful within their disciplines.

In evaluating scholarly and creative activity, units are encouraged to adopt a holistic approach that recognizes the quality, rigor, and impact of a faculty member's work rather than relying solely on journal-based metrics. Consistent with the principles

articulated in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)<sup>1</sup>, units should avoid using impact factors or similar journal-level metrics as the primary indicator of scholarly quality. Instead, faculty contributions should be evaluated based on the substance, influence, originality, and disciplinary relevance of the work. Both Unit RTP Criteria and individual faculty may consider emphasizing individual citation achievements (e.g., number of citations, h-index, i-10 index). Faculty should reflect on their contributions.

Holistic evaluation may include consideration of a wide range of scholarly practices and contributions, including but not limited to peer-reviewed publications, juried exhibitions, performances, applied scholarship, professional presentations, grant activity, and collaborative projects. Units are also encouraged to recognize contributions that reflect evolving standards of scholarly rigor and transparency, such as open science practices, preregistration of studies, data sharing, methodological transparency, and efforts that support reproducibility and cumulative knowledge building. These examples are intended to illustrate the range of ways faculty may contribute over the course of a career and should not be interpreted as limiting or exhaustive definitions.

Units should also recognize that mentorship of students in research and creative work, collaborative authorship, and leadership in scholarly or creative initiatives may represent meaningful scholarly engagement, particularly as faculty advance in rank and assume broader mentoring roles.

To support the integrity of scholarly evaluation, units are encouraged to develop shared, discipline-informed understandings of how to assess the credibility and quality of publication venues and other dissemination outlets. Unit RTP criteria may describe general indicators commonly recognized within the field for distinguishing reputable venues from those that engage in predatory or exploitative practices, while acknowledging that standards vary across disciplines and publication models.

Predatory publishing is characterized not by a for-profit or open access business model, but by deceptive practices, lack of meaningful peer review, absence of

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<sup>1</sup> The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (<https://sfдора.org/read/>) recommends that institutions “be explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting, especially for early-stage investigators, that the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.” In addition, it is recommended to “consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets and software) in addition to research publications, and consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.”

editorial transparency, or failure to adhere to recognized scholarly standards. Units should recognize that for-profit and open access publications are not inherently predatory, and that many highly reputable journals and publishers operate under these models.

Rather than relying solely on lists or rigid exclusions, units are encouraged to articulate discipline-appropriate criteria for evaluating venue quality, such as editorial oversight, peer review rigor, transparency of review processes, reputation within the field, affiliation with professional societies or organizations, and alignment with professional norms. The goal of such guidance is to promote informed scholarly judgment and protect faculty from unintentionally engaging with exploitative outlets, while preserving flexibility for legitimate and emerging forms of dissemination. Overall, the intent of unit criteria should be to promote high-quality, ethical, and impactful scholarly and creative work, evaluated in context and in alignment with disciplinary norms, rather than to rely on narrow metrics or uniform expectations.

### **Professionally Related Service**

Unit RTP criteria should describe acceptable and exceptional service in ways that reflect the responsibilities and opportunities within the discipline and the institution. Professionally related service is a core professional expectation of tenure-track and tenured faculty and plays an important role in supporting shared governance, institutional functioning, and professional engagement. Units should determine what forms of service are most appropriate and meaningful in their context, recognizing that service contributions may occur at the department, college, university, system, professional, or community level.

Acceptable service may include participation in shared governance, committee work, program support, and student advising, while exceptional service may include sustained leadership roles, major institutional contributions, professional association leadership, or community engagement related to the faculty member's expertise. Units should recognize that service expectations may vary across career stages and assignments, and that service contributions often occur unevenly over time. The goal of unit criteria should be to articulate what constitutes meaningful and sustained professional engagement, while maintaining balance across teaching, scholarship or creative activity, and service so that no area of faculty responsibility is consistently neglected.

## **Early Promotion**

Unit RTP criteria should include clearly articulated descriptions of the level of exceptional performance required to support early tenure and/or early promotion. Because expectations vary significantly across disciplines, units should define what constitutes a record that substantially exceeds the normal standard for tenure or promotion. Units may consider evidence of sustained excellence across teaching, scholarly or creative activity, and service; impact beyond the department or institution; or other indicators of distinction that align with disciplinary norms. The examples considered by units should reflect the culture and expectations of the field and should not be limited to a single model of achievement.

## **Post-Tenure Review**

Unit RTP criteria should include clearly articulated criteria for post-tenure review that reflect the ongoing professional expectations of tenured faculty. These criteria should emphasize continued effectiveness in teaching and meaningful engagement in professionally related service, while recognizing that scholarly or creative activity remains an important component of a faculty member's professional profile.

Tenured faculty are expected to maintain meaningful engagement in scholarly or creative activity appropriate to their discipline, rank, and assignment. Consistent with University policy on faculty workload and professional responsibilities, such engagement should be understood as participation in the ongoing scholarly or creative process rather than as a requirement to produce specific outputs within a fixed period of time.

Evidence of scholarly or creative engagement may include a wide range of documented activities, such as development of scholarly or creative projects; preparation, revision, or submission of manuscripts or creative works; grant or fellowship activity; conference participation; collaboration; mentorship of student research or creative work; peer review or editorial activity; or other contributions appropriate to the discipline. These examples are illustrative and not exhaustive.

For post-tenure review conducted in the absence of an application for promotion, evaluation should focus on acceptable performance in teaching or professional performance and service, and on evidence of continued professional engagement across all areas of responsibility. Scholarly or creative activity should be evaluated in a developmental and contextual manner, recognizing that contributions may take different forms and may occur across extended timelines depending on disciplinary norms and career trajectory.

Units should ensure that post-tenure review criteria support continued professional growth and vitality, and should avoid framing expectations in ways that impose rigid productivity requirements or narrow definitions of scholarly contribution. The purpose of post-tenure review is to encourage sustained engagement and ongoing development, not to replicate promotion-level expectations or to function as a punitive mechanism.