**American University Library**
**Guidelines for Tenure-Line Library Faculty Members for**
**Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion**
**University Library Committee on Faculty Actions**
7/19/11
10/25/17
1/22/20
3/15/23

Effective June 15, 2023

**"AU cannot be excellent without being truly inclusive, and without taking concrete, specific steps to improve inclusion on campus."**

**AU's Plan for Inclusive Excellence, p. 2.**
https://www.american.edu/president/diversity/inclusive-excellence/upload/ie_phase2_actionplan_v4.pdf

The *Faculty Manual* is the official source of information on requirements for reappointment, promotion, and tenure. These guidelines are designed to orient tenure-line library faculty members and evaluators by providing information about and examples of the types of activities that fulfill the three criteria of primary responsibilities, scholarship, and service described in the *Manual.* [1]

There are three sources of evaluation for library faculty: review by administrative heads, external reviews by library professionals outside American University, and peer reviews of American University library faculty.

The quality of the performance of a library faculty member in carrying out their primary responsibilities is the chief criterion for evaluation. The percentages assigned below to primary responsibilities (70%), scholarship (15%), and service (15%) represent the customary distribution of workload. In order to be eligible for tenure and promotion, library faculty members are expected to demonstrate excellence in all three areas. The library faculty value DEI-related work in all three areas of evaluation and encourage faculty to include it in their files following the examples in the criteria described below.

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[1] For further information about promotion and tenure of librarians, see Association of College and Research Libraries. A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians. https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/promotiontenure (Accessed Aug. 25, 2022).

**Primary Responsibilities (70%)**

These activities—the main functions performed by library faculty members—account for approximately seventy percent of their time. **Primary responsibilities may vary among individuals. However, diversity, equity, and inclusion is a commitment shared by all library faculty in their primary responsibilities.** As the library is a complex organization where many different functions that support the educational mission of the university take place at the same time, a library faculty member's job may include some of the following:

Library faculty may assist researchers through multiple modalities that meet AU community needs. For example, they may anticipate research needs through the development of online resources such as subject guides which can reflect diverse voices and other content that supports inclusive excellence, or they may meet individual needs with individual consultations that provide general guidance and recommendations on parameters for research while helping individuals identify and use sources appropriate for their research.

Library faculty may participate in classroom instruction at the invitation of teaching faculty, through specific curricular programs, or in the creation of learning objects. Library faculty engaged in teaching support the development of information literacy for AU students and are encouraged to incorporate critical, anti-racist, or inclusive pedagogy and practices into their instruction. They build their instructional design based on best practices in librarianship and pedagogy. Their engagement may include teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate curriculum level and participation in special programs such as the CORE.

- Library faculty may engage in student mentoring that goes beyond typical instruction activities or research support. This service can be invaluable to the growth and retention of AU students and should be acknowledged in files for action.

- Library faculty may engage in developing, assessing, implementing, and maintaining library collections in appropriate formats to provide access to all potential community users. Library faculty establish and follow collection development policies that support current and emerging curricular programs and research and that emphasize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in building collections. They develop and maintain strong relationships that facilitate communication between teaching faculty and library faculty about appropriate collection development. They provide information literacy instruction in specific curricular areas and support students in those areas with research consultations.

- Library faculty may focus on the processes associated with acquiring items for library collections, including selecting vendors, maintaining vendor relationships, negotiating license agreements, and maintaining usage statistics as well as reviewing and implementing new acquisitions programs. They may serve as administrative heads for other faculty or supervise staff engaged in these processes. They may have a prominent role in developing, allocating, and managing aspects of the library's budget. They prepare budget requests and reports and share information about market forces that impact the library budget for collections.

- Library faculty evaluate, implement, develop, and maintain systems, databases, and knowledge bases which support activities related to accessing library resources. They are responsible for describing library resources, demonstrating knowledge of local, national, or international cataloging and metadata standards that enable discoverability of and access to library resources for the university community. They have oversight for creating metadata for library resources that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive particularly in its use of terminology and vocabulary and in its descriptions of digitized collections in library catalogs. Assigning such metadata may be both retrospective and current. They may be involved in evaluating, testing and implementing new library systems.

- Library faculty may support access to research data and statistics through selection and communication about appropriate resources, and they may interpret the use of those resources for individuals and groups. They may also promote community knowledge about best practices and standards for the retention of and access to data developed through research projects. They may also promote practices that ensure the unbiased collection and retention of data.

- Librarians may engage in a range of activities associated with scholarly communication including promotion and implementation of open access to scholarship. They may foster an understanding of traditional and alternative metrics for research and particularly promote the ways in which to make those metrics more inclusive. At the university level, they support the system through which research and scholarship is created, evaluated, distributed, and preserved.

- Library faculty may have significant management or administrative responsibilities. Library faculty may be responsible for portfolio or project management, including strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, assessment, and aligning human and fiscal resources to meet program needs. They may engage in hiring, training, mentoring, or evaluating library staff and faculty or oversee these responsibilities when delegated to others. They follow all university policies and procedures and best practices to ensure that hiring and retention decisions promote diversity and that the processes of making assignments and conducting evaluations are equitable. They work toward creating and ensuring inclusive environments. Librarians with management responsibilities have a special responsibility to mentor library faculty. Library faculty without formal management responsibilities may also serve as formal or informal mentors to colleagues. Informal mentors should acknowledge such "invisible labor" in files for action.

- Library faculty may engage in a variety of other responsibilities, projects, and assignments. For instance, they may engage in special long-term or short-term projects or liaisons that connect the library with special curricular programs, or they may facilitate communication about library services and resources to the campus community. They may act as campus resources for promotion of best practices in a variety of teaching and research-related areas such as copyright. They may work to enhance the university curriculum in a variety of other ways. They may represent the

library in a variety of settings, such as contributing to Washington Research Library Consortium committees.

For library faculty members, metrics on activities will vary. There is no typical number of classes taught, no benchmarked number of research consultations or number of items added to a library system. Activities and time spent will vary from function to function and from semester to semester. Library faculty members can differ widely in their case-by-case primary responsibilities so it is not possible to determine what a typical workload would be.

It is the duty of the library faculty member to discuss their workload with their administrative head and how it compares from year to year. It is also the expectation that evaluative letters from the administrative head, the University Library Committee on Faculty Actions (ULFCA), and the University Librarian will contextualize the workload.

**Scholarship (15%)**

This criterion of scholarship includes scholarly, creative, and certain kinds of professional publications. Library faculty are customarily expected to allocate fifteen percent of their workload, or approximately three working days per month, to scholarly activities.

Librarians in the profession, unlike library faculty in a school of library or information science, are generally focused on practical applications in the profession. Scholarship for library faculty at AU may be theoretical or applied and may be specific to the fields of library and information sciences. Advancement in the field of librarianship is often achieved through the work of individual librarians under the auspices of professional organizations. Leadership in associations and on committees that advances theory and contributes to best practices in the library profession is recognized as scholarship in the field.

Scholarship in any field deepens the practitioner's knowledge of that field and is valuable in many areas of librarianship. Scholarship for a library faculty member may also pertain to disciplinary areas to which the faculty member brings additional expertise.

To be considered for tenure and promotion to Associate Librarian, library faculty are expected to achieve a significant scholarly record. Library faculty should produce **peer-reviewed** scholarly outputs, including peer-reviewed publications, juried or invited conference **presentations** including serving as a keynote speaker, books published with academic presses, or other modes of output that undergo review or vetting of peers before or after dissemination, though the process for review or vetting may vary considerably depending on the mode of dissemination. Some examples include: post-publication commentary similar to a review, open peer review publications, or collated discussion or incorporation of disseminated scholarship into other scholarly or professional outputs. These outputs may be in any format, including electronic publications.

Some library faculty participate in peer-reviewed, juried, or invited performances or creative works. These peer-reviewed, juried, or invited performances or creative works are seen as equivalent to peer-reviewed presentations. As a member of the academy, a library faculty

member may choose to pursue research in their area of scholarly interest, as well as a broad range of cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary avenues of scholarly research.

While candidates are expected to produce vetted, juried, invited, or peer-reviewed scholarship, consideration will also be given to other forms of scholarly output, such as book chapters, columns, guest editorships, committee publications, and conference proceedings.

Professional organization work is another one of the ways library faculty members maintain or contribute to best practices in the profession and maintain or contribute to current awareness of new services, products, resources, and technology. Library faculty members demonstrate growth in professional activities by showing evidence of active and increased levels of engagement and responsibility in organizational work.

Additional evidence of scholarship can be represented by completing work in the following formats: abstracts, reviews, grant proposals, grant awards, poster presentations, exhibits, non-refereed publications and presentations, textbooks, testimony on legislative issues, judging awards competitions, and professional web contributions. Seeking or obtaining grant awards is not required for scholarship but may be considered as evidence of scholarship. Grants may also be included in primary responsibilities or in service, depending on the nature of the grant.

Items not yet completed and/or made publicly available (accompanied by appropriate documentation) are considered mainly as evidence of potential or as an indicator of a level of continuing research activity. For evidence of scholarly or professional contributions not listed or named in this document, a library faculty member may submit that evidence at the time of review for consideration by the University Library Committee on Faculty Actions and other reviewers.

Much of the advancement of librarianship also depends on formal cooperative efforts, usually conducted under the auspices of professional organizations. Such activities are acknowledged as requiring application of knowledge and expertise equivalent to that demonstrated in independent research and publication. Although the outcome of such activities often results in publications in which authorship is credited to an organizational body rather than to individuals, it is understood that the members of the group that wrote the publication are its co-authors. The faculty member should describe their role in projects or publications sponsored by a professional organization. The faculty member may also include letters from project leaders or others who can verify the scope of their contribution.

Impact in the field of librarianship is sometimes driven by influence on practice. Because peer-reviewed scholarly research is not a standard requirement throughout the profession, librarians tend to be consumers of scholarship that will help them change practice rather than contributors to theoretical literature. For example, specific evidence that peers are consulting research or that innovations are being adopted at other institutions shows impact in librarianship. Similarly, community-based research can result in scholarly impact or impact on the community, and both outcomes are considered to be valuable forms of impact. Evidence of these impacts may be qualitative and/or quantitative in nature. For example, numbers of views or downloads of scholarly outputs or translated research outputs for a

community audience, or conference presentation attendees could measure potential impact, while follow-up requests for information, direct or indirect measures of community impact, and inclusion of articles in working groups on scholarly networks and references to work in social media may also demonstrate impact through qualitative measures by demonstrating the reach and impact of research, including its reach in the community. It is up to the candidate to demonstrate evidence of such impact.

Contributing to publications published by professional associations also shows impact because these works influence developments in practice in librarianship. Examples include standards, best practices, and major studies to advance the field, among others.

Library faculty are encouraged to engage in scholarship, research, and creative works that attend to diversity, equity, and inclusion, whether in intellectual content, theoretical frameworks, processes and methodology, analyses of data, participation of research subjects, engagement with the wider public, or making research available in venues that actively adopt DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) practice. Library faculty are encouraged to include a description of how a research project centers underrepresented voices, or how completed scholarship furthers the goals of inclusive excellence or equity.

One demonstration of DEI values in published scholarship is open access, as it contributes to a more equitable model of research. Library faculty are encouraged to adopt open research practices. These practices may include: serving in roles as peer reviewer, editor, or advisor for open access outlets, participating in open peer or post-publication review processes, publishing manuscripts and/or publications in AU's institutional or other appropriate repositories, and making research data, presentation materials, code, or other research materials openly available.

Candidates should describe their growth in scholarship as well as plans to sustain growth during the post-tenure period. They should include evidence of how their scholarly outputs or activities are having an impact on the profession.

**Service (15%)**

The library is an essential component in the higher education environment. Library faculty partner with teaching and research faculty and the administration to provide quality education and guide the institution forward through the practice of shared governance. University service activities address the general good of the institution. Service activities inside the library and in university-wide environments ensure that the expertise and perspective of the library faculty are taken into consideration as the campus engages in cycles of assessment and implementation of research, teaching, and student support activities. Through their service, library faculty further develop this partnership. All members of the library faculty are expected to participate in different aspects of university life, and to demonstrate how their individual service activities contribute to library and university achievement of strategic goals.

While we are in the process of creating a truly equitable environment, these guidelines acknowledge the impact of invisible labor and encourage library faculty to include contributions to DEI-related activities both internal and external in their files for action.

Invisible labor (defined in the Working Definition of Invisible Labor for ULFC Documents included in the suggested resource list at the end) can show up in all areas of academic librarianship. Service is no exception. A growing body of research shows that some areas of service including working on DEI initiatives or speaking at recruiting events often fall to historically minoritized communities and is either hidden from promotion review or is undervalued. This work should be documented and counts fully toward the completion of the service requirement.

Library faculty typically devote fifteen percent of their time to service, which may also include service beyond the university to professional and scholarly organizations.

Contributions may include some of the following:
- Service on the University Senate or on any of its committees
- Participation on task forces and special committees of the university
- Involvement with student organizations and activities
- Recruitment of students and faculty from underrepresented groups
- Work on processes, policies, and tools that promote equitable and inclusive practices
- Service to professional organizations
- Participation in library events
- Representing the university or library at community events

Service on other entities involved specifically in library faculty governance, such as designated roles in the University Library Faculty Council, the University Library Committee on Faculty Actions, and the Merit and Annual Review Committee, are also important contributions to the university as well as service on other internal committees, for example, DEI committees, and project and other teams, as long as they are not linked to primary responsibilities.

Library faculty members should demonstrate growth with evidence of increased levels of activity and leadership in this third criterion for evaluation.

**Primary Responsibilities: Promotion to Rank of Librarian (70%)**

For promotion to Librarian, library faculty are expected to demonstrate increasing growth, initiative, and leadership in their professional work, and to take on increasing responsibility whether or not they hold management positions. It is up to the candidate for promotion to explain how they have grown in the career path and to put that growth into the context of the profession. It is important for the administrative head, the University Library Committee on Faculty Actions, and the University Librarian to speak to that growth, initiative, and increased responsibility of the candidate when writing the evaluative letters. The work of librarianship cannot be quantified using the same methods (i.e. teaching evaluations) that the

teaching faculty use. It is necessary for the candidate to describe the growth over their career and for the evaluative letters to put that growth into the context of the profession.

**Scholarship: Promotion to Rank of Librarian (15%)**

To be considered for promotion to the rank of Librarian, library faculty members are expected to exceed the qualifications for scholarship for Associate Librarian. In addition, they must show a continued record of growth and influence in their scholarly activity.

Candidates must document that they have impactful publications and/or activities from the above criteria after their tenure decision.

These activities must show impact, and it is up to the candidate to explain evidence of impact. Some methods of demonstrating impact (but not all methods are required at once) include direct citation, acceptance rates, views and downloads, documentation of a peer adopting an innovation or practice, invitations to speak or engage in further scholarly activity because of previous publications or activities, mentions in social media, high attendance counts at presentations, etc. The totality of a library faculty member's record since achieving tenure must be considered.

**Service: Promotion to Rank of Librarian (15%)**

To be promoted to Librarian, library faculty members must have increased their level of responsibility or leadership in their service commitments. For example, chairing a committee would show increased responsibility. They must have a record of active and constructive service contributions to both the library and the broader AU community.

**Suggested Resource List**

The following are intended to serve as resources for library faculty wishing to consult national standards, policies, and best practices in our profession, and as other useful documents for documenting and contextualizing accomplishments and impact.

[ACRL Framework for Impactful Scholarship and Metrics](#)

[ACRL Policy Statement on Open Access of Scholarship by Academic Librarians](#)

[Checklist for Evaluating DEI Practice of Journals](#)

[Working Definition of Invisible Labor for ULFC Documents](#)