Department of Computer Science

Criteria for Promotion and Tenure

Effective 2022–2023 last revised October 2020

I. The Promotion, Retention, and Tenure Committee

The Computer Science Department will maintain a standing committee on promotion, retention, and tenure (PRT). The PRT committee will have a minimum of five tenured faculty members representing all areas within the department. The faculty of the department will elect the committee with committee members serving staggered three-year terms. If the department cannot form a committee of five, the department chair, after consultation with the faculty in the department, will select faculty from other departments in the college to make up the committee. The chair of the department may serve on the committee as a nonvoting member.

The PRT committee will employ criteria for promotion, retention and tenure that agree with the university criteria published in the A-State Faculty Handbook. In evaluating the three general areas of professional activity (teaching, research and service) the committee will require satisfactory performance in all areas and may require superior performance in one or more areas. (Superior performance will be interpreted to mean that peers within the department consider the activities of the applicant to be observably more than the satisfactory level of performance.) Requests for promotion and/or tenure will be reviewed on the basis of professional performance in these areas in accordance with the stipulations outlined below. These stipulations constitute the minimum conditions for consideration for promotion and/or tenure. For promotion from assistant to associate professor and for promotion from associate to full professor, the applicant should assume that the expected level of research activity will increase over time.

II. Promotion from Instructor to Assistant Professor

Faculty at the instructor rank who complete requirements for the terminal degree should provide the department chair with evidence of completion. In this case, it is not necessary to apply for promotion. Upon favorable recommendations by the chair and dean and approval by the Vice Chancellor and Provost for Academic Affairs and Research, promotion to the rank of assistant professor will be granted based on the guidelines in Section “Promotion from Instructor to Assistant Professor” of the A-State Faculty Handbook.

III. Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor

1. Possession of an earned doctoral degree.

2. Demonstrated ability as an effective teacher while upholding the academic standards of the department. Criteria used for determining teaching performance will include course preparation, peer and supervisor evaluations, apparent student preparation for subsequent departmental courses and student evaluations.

3. Evidence of professional achievement demonstrated by peer-reviewed publications, presentations of papers before high-level professional meetings, and/or research grants of intellectual significance for the department. Research activity must be appropriate to the needs of an institution moving toward offering more doctoral-level degree programs.

4. Service to the university, college, department and community through active participation on committees as member or chair, student advisement, and support for departmental projects. The PRT committee is interested in participation quality rather than quantity as indicated by peer opinions, peer election to important committees as member or chair, and performance evaluations by other committee members and committee chairs.

5. The PRT committee expects an applicant to exhibit superior performance in teaching and in at least one of the other two general areas of professional activity at A-State and acceptable performance in the third.

6. A minimum of six years as an assistant professor except in an outstanding case that is clearly apparent to peers within the department.

IV. Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor

1. Possession of an earned doctoral degree.

2. Demonstrated ability as an effective teacher while upholding the academic standards of the department. Criteria used for determining teaching performance will include course preparation, peer and supervisor evaluations, apparent student preparation for subsequent departmental courses and student evaluations.

3. Evidence of professional achievement demonstrated by peer-reviewed publications, presentations of papers before professional organizations, and grants on subjects of intellectual significance for the department. The expected amount of research and grant activity will be based on the instructional and service loads assigned during the instructor’s years at A-State.

4. Service to the university, college, department and community through active participation on committees as member or chair, student advisement, and support for departmental projects. The PRT committee is interested in participation quality rather than quantity as indicated by peer opinions, peer election to important committees as member or chair, and performance evaluations by other committee members and committee chairs.

5. The PRT Committee expects an applicant to exhibit superior performance in teaching and in at least one of the other two general areas of professional activity at A-State and acceptable performance in the third.

6. A minimum of six years as an associate professor except in an outstanding case that is clearly apparent to peers within the department.

V. Recommendation for Tenure

1. The PRT committee will follow the guidelines for tenure outlined in the A-State Faculty Handbook.

2. Possession of an earned doctoral degree.

3. Demonstrated ability as an effective teacher while upholding the academic standards of the department. Criteria used for determining teaching performance will include course preparation, peer and supervisor evaluations, apparent student preparation for subsequent departmental courses and student evaluations.

4. Evidence of professional achievement demonstrated by peer-reviewed publications, presentations of papers before high-level professional meetings, and/or research grants of intellectual significance to the department. Research activity must be appropriate to the needs of an institution moving toward offering more doctoral-level degree programs.

5. Service to the university, college, department and community through active participation on committees as member or chair, student advisement, and support for departmental projects. The PRT committee is interested in participation quality rather than quantity as indicated by peer opinions, peer election to important committees as member or chair, and performance evaluations by other committee members and committee chairs.

6. The PRT Committee expects an applicant to exhibit superior performance in teaching and in at least one of the other two general areas of professional activity at A-State and acceptable performance in the third.

VI. Annual Written Reviews of Progress of All Pre-tenure Faculty

The departmental PRT Committee will review annually the progress towards tenure of pre-tenured faculty and will prepare written recommendations regarding retention that will be forwarded to the department chair. The chair will review the retention recommendations, add his or her own recommendations, and send them to the college PRT committee or to the dean as determined by college procedures.

VII. Comprehensive Third Year Reviews of Progress of All Pre-tenure Faculty

In keeping with university guidelines, a comprehensive pre-tenure review during the third year of employment at A-State will be completed for all pre-tenure faculty. Evaluation will be based on the department, college and university criteria in place during their third year of employment on a pre-tenure appointment.

VIII. Application for Early Tenure

Since it is unusual for a faculty member to amass a record of performance that reflects exemplary productivity in less time than the standard probationary period, accelerated tenure is rare. However, any faculty member has the right to submit an application seeking tenure during any application period in which they can clearly demonstrate meeting the performance criteria that would be expected during the mandatory review. If a faculty member fails to earn tenure in this accelerated review cycle, he/she may apply for tenure again only in the sixth year of the pre-tenure cycle.

IX. Negotiation of Tenure and Rank with Initial Appointment

A prospective faculty member (with the exception of presidential candidates) may negotiate the terms of initial employment with regard to tenure status and academic rank based on the professional productivity earned in previous employment settings. Any such terms must be approved by the Vice Chancellor and Provost for Academic Affairs and Research of the university and be based on the thorough review and positive recommendations of the departmental PRT committee within the academic unit in which tenure and rank will be held. Documentation of negotiated terms authorizing application for early tenure and/or promotion must be included with the PRT application.