

UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO LIBRARIES

Criteria for Library Faculty Personnel Actions

June 2009 Revision



University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Criteria for Library Faculty Personnel Actions

The Criteria document was last revised by the University Library Faculty in July 2005 and approved by Provost Tripathi in November 2005 and by President Simpson in June 2006. Editorial revisions were made to the document in June 2009. The Criteria will be subject to review and possible revision no later than January 2013.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Faculty of the University Libraries has long recognized the need for its own criteria document for personnel actions including appointment, promotion, and tenure. Its "Criteria for Library Faculty Personnel Actions as Approved by the President" had been in place since December 1982. This document is the third update to the original statement. The first substantive update was completed in November 1998. The second in October 2002 reviewed criteria from twelve leading public universities. The Appendix lists these schools. A third update was completed in July 2005.

This document is intended for the information of the Faculty of the University Libraries and all faculty review bodies. It is framed within and subordinate to the general guidelines set forth in the *Policies of the Board of Trustees*ⁱ and the more specific guidelines set forth in the University at Buffalo's "Policies, Procedures, and Criteria for Faculty Personnel Actions" (approved by the President, June, 1988 and revised in 2001), hereinafter referred to as the PPC.ⁱⁱ

When appointed, new faculty members shall be advised of these criteria, and the *Standing Rules of the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee*.ⁱⁱⁱ New appointees are encouraged to review these documents with their supervisors and the Libraries Personnel Officer.

The PPC recognizes differences between teaching faculty and library faculty. Evaluations of library faculty should be based upon what librarians do. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

Developing, Acquiring, and Maintaining Collections and Resources

- Identify, review, and evaluate the quality of publications and resources in all formats for inclusion in the Libraries collections and resources.
- Provide access to collections and resources through the classification and cataloging of materials.
- Maintain quality control over records in the Libraries catalog.
- Preserve library materials in all formats that are determined useful for posterity.
- Review and evaluate the intellectual content of the Libraries collections and resources.

Reference and Instructional Services

- Assist and teach library users methods of information access.
- Develop effective and creative methods to teach students and faculty the technologies and strategies required to access information in all formats.
- Provide in-depth reference and referral services.
- Optimize communication with library users to facilitate information transfer.
- Help library users interpret data.
- Assist users to prioritize and assess information resources.
- Prepare instructional materials that facilitate use of information resources.
- Provide instructional programs and workshops.
- Help library users understand the economic and social issues that affect use of information. These include, but are not limited to, copyright restrictions, plagiarism, and the importance of well-documented footnotes and bibliographic citations.

Outreach

- Keep abreast of curriculum changes, research interests, and developments in the University and academe.
- Publicize and market the library and its services to the University and non-University communities.
- Develop solid working relationships with faculty, students, and appropriate segments of the non-university community.
- Share expertise with colleagues and administrators in other libraries.
- Identify, develop, secure, and administer grant and development funding.

Management and Professional Growth

- Develop creative approaches to combine high level management skills and a service orientation towards problem solving.
- Maintain hardware and software required for effective delivery of electronic media.
- Cooperate with other segments of the University to develop, plan, and implement innovative information services.
- Monitor and control financial resources.
- Manage time, costs, and resources required to perform work activities and special projects.
- Keep current with changing technical skills required to effectively acquire, catalog, retrieve, and preserve library collections and resources.
- Provide and pursue suitable training opportunities to fulfill service expectations and encourage innovation.

In terms parallel to those used for professorial faculty, the PPC establishes the following five criteria for assessing the performance of library faculty: competence in librarianship, contributions to the libraries and their services, scholarly accomplishment, effectiveness of University service, and potential for continuing professional growth. In this document, "continuing professional growth" is included under the heading "Professional Contributions."^{iv}

Steady progress in all five criteria cited below is expected as a librarian's career develops. This document recognizes the second criterion, "Contributions to the Libraries and Their Services," as the most significant factor. Although the criteria recognize that candidates will excel in different areas, candidates should attain evidence of achievement in all five sections. These criteria should be considered minimal standards for appointment and promotion in the University.

THE CRITERIA

- Section One. Competence in Librarianship
- Section Two. Contributions to the Libraries and Their Services
- Section Three. Professional Contributions
- Section Four. Scholarly Accomplishment
- Section Five. Effectiveness of University and Community Service

Section One. COMPETENCE IN LIBRARIANSHIP

The basic credential for appointment as a librarian usually is a Master's Degree in Library or Information Science from an American Library Association accredited program, and is the appropriate professional, terminal degree for most librarians. Certain specialized positions in the University Libraries appropriately may require professional or educational qualifications in lieu of the Master's Degree in Library or Information Science. Such positions may, for example, include work with archival materials or rare book and manuscript collections, may involve a concentration on material preservation techniques, or may involve technical skills necessary for working with electronic and other non-print media.

In addition to the basic library or information science degree, or the specialized qualifications described in the preceding paragraph, appropriate supplementary evidence of competence in librarianship might include additional earned degrees, certificates of advanced and/or specialized training, and language, subject, or technical expertise appropriate for a particular position description.

Section Two. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LIBRARIES AND THEIR SERVICES

Excellence in the performance of a librarian's primary job responsibilities is the most crucial factor and is given greater weight than any other criterion in reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions. Surveys compiled by the Library Faculty in 1988 and 2001 of library criteria documents in peer public research institutions show the pre-eminent role of job performance for personnel actions. Moreover, "A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians" approved by the Association of College and Research Libraries in June 2005 states that the "basic criterion for promotion in academic rank is to perform professional level tasks that contribute to the educational and research mission of the institution."^v Concrete and specific evidence in support of excellence in a librarian's contributions to the Libraries and their services must appear in the candidate's dossier.

Contributions to the Libraries and their services are subject to rigorous critical analysis primarily by library colleagues and, where applicable, by University at Buffalo professorial faculty and students. The most visible examples of contributions to the Libraries are creating library collections and resources that are relevant to academic programs and providing effective instruction, reference, and information delivery services. The quality of bibliographic control over collections and resources, and imagination and skill with which complex problems are solved or approaches utilized are no less important than more visible accomplishments. When a librarian's work generates library guides, media productions, exhibits, electronic media, or other practice-related matter, such materials are evaluated by colleagues and, whenever possible, by appropriate evaluators from outside the University. These resources can involve research and creative efforts comparable to that required for articles in refereed journals.

Section Three. PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Librarians must demonstrate promise of growth through professional contributions, continuing education, and a pattern of increased responsibility or expertise. A librarian's professional contributions may be demonstrated by activities such as, but not limited to:

- Visible and effective participation in local, state, and national professional and academic associations.
- Authorship of regular newsletter articles or columns.
- Publication of book or media reviews.
- Editing a newsletter.
- Creating, editing, or maintaining Web sites/Web publications
- Consultantships.
- Fellowships/internships/exchange programs.
- Lectures, presentations, or participation on panels at professional training programs and meetings.
- Participation in grant-related activities.
- Plan and organize lectures, workshops, and other programs for the University and non-University communities.
- Moderate electronic discussion groups.

Section Four. SCHOLARLY ACCOMPLISHMENT

In the academic setting, scholarly ability is evidenced by research that serves to increase the body of knowledge in a given discipline. Practicing librarians have opportunities to engage in pure and applied research in librarianship, and, dependent on their professional specializations, academic backgrounds and intellectual interests, in areas outside librarianship.

There are two critical elements in evaluating research and creative activity: publication and peer review. Publication results in accessibility of the work to an appropriate community. Peer review is characterized by the disinterested, critical review of the candidate's research or creative activity by respected members of that community. Refereed publication is the most valued model of publication and is characterized by pre-publication, blind peer review. Although they may not undergo rigorous review prior to publication, publications or other information products subjected to post-publication peer review may also be considered evidence of scholarly accomplishment.

Scholarly contributions may include, but are not limited to:

- Books.
- Chapters in books.
- Articles.
- Editing of journals.
- Conference papers presented and published.
- Audiovisual productions.
- Computer software, databases, and other electronic media.
- Significant Web based publications that can be peer reviewed. Research aids such as indexes, thesauri, catalogs, and union lists.
- Significant bibliographies
- Significant aggregations of shared bibliographic records
- Significant media reviews and book reviews.
- Scholarly exhibits (physical and/or virtual).

Administrative documents and work products in the form of reports, handbooks, manuals, Web productions, bibliographic records and similar items may be considered in this category if they present original intellectual content, incorporate research and are able to be reviewed by outside evaluators.

To be considered significant, bibliographies should be meaningfully organized and/or include features such as critical introductions and evaluative annotations, or they should contribute other special value to the information community. To be considered significant, a book or media review should be a review essay that not only critically evaluates the material but also places it in the context of the relevant literature. Shorter reviews that do not meet this standard are appropriately considered under Section Three (Professional Contributions).

Since quantitative limitations are imposed by the nature of a librarian's professional obligations, (i.e., a 12-month year consisting of structured work days spent largely on internal library responsibilities), evaluation should be primarily qualitative. In cases of joint authorship, care should be taken to recognize and evaluate the unique contributions of the candidate.

Section Five. EFFECTIVENESS OF UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Service to the University and the community includes effective participation in faculty governance of the University Libraries and the University, committee work, and involvement with campus groups. It also includes work with students or with community groups beyond that expected in the second criterion, "Contributions to the Libraries and Their Services." Evidence of such service is documented primarily in the librarian's curriculum vitae and by letters from officers or members of appropriate groups.

APPENDIX

INSTITUTIONS SURVEYED BY THE AD HOC COMMITTEE TO GATHER PROMOTION AND TENURE CRITERIA DOCUMENTS

November 1988 and October 2001

- University of California Libraries
- University of Florida at Gainesville
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Indiana University Libraries
- University of Iowa
- University of Michigan
- University of Minnesota
- Ohio State University
- Pennsylvania State University
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Washington
- University of Wisconsin

ⁱ *Policies of the Board of Trustees. State University of New York*, July 26, 2006.
http://www.suny.edu/Board_of_Trustees/PDF/Policies.pdf.
Consulted February 3, 2009.

ⁱⁱ State University of New York at Buffalo, *Faculty/Staff Handbook*, "III.A."Policies, Procedures, and Criteria for Faculty Personnel Actions {including appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure}," <http://www.business.buffalo.edu/UbbContent/Hrs/facultyhandbook/index.htm>.
Consulted: February 3, 2009.

ⁱⁱⁱ State University of New York at Buffalo. University Libraries. *Committee on Appointment, Promotion and Tenure, Standing Rules*. Most current copy is at <http://staffweb.lib.buffalo.edu/committees/facultyexecutive/gov-docs>
Consulted: October 7, 2010.

^{iv} The order of these criteria differ from that in the PPC to reflect more accurately the weight attached to them in evaluating members of the University Libraries faculty.

^v "A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians," Association of College and Research Libraries, approved at ALA Annual Conference, June 2005.
<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/promotiontenure.cfm>.
Consulted February 3, 2009.