

**DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION SCIENCE
CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANKS
OF
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND PROFESSOR**

Approved February 13, 2026

This document describes factors considered in making decisions about promotion in the Department of Nutrition Science. The official University policies, procedures, and criteria for promotion and tenure are stated in several documents available through links at <https://hhs.purdue.edu/faculty-staff/promotion-and-tenure/>. The criteria listed below are intended as useful information both for faculty seeking promotion and for members of the Department's Primary Committee and of the HHS Area Committee who are responsible for evaluating candidates' credentials. The criteria are not intended as a checklist for promotion. Instead, each of them will be evaluated in the context provided by the full record.

To be considered for promotion, a tenured or tenure-track faculty member should contribute to all mission areas appropriate to their position (in most cases, contributing to all three areas of discovery, learning, and engagement), and should meet minimum thresholds in each area. Candidates for promotion should demonstrate *excellence* and scholarly productivity in one area and *strength* in more than one area. For most candidates, the primary basis for promotion will be consistent with the basis on which the candidates were originally hired, which is excellence in discovery in most but not all cases. If consultations between the department head, the candidate, and other faculty suggest that a faculty member's responsibilities at the time of consideration for promotion justify placing primary emphasis on another mission area, that other area could be the primary basis for promotion. In addition, all promotion candidates should provide evidence of their commitment to active and responsive mentorship, to their activity in mentoring, advising, and supporting the academic success of undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral scientists, in their promotion documentation. For research faculty, the criteria for promotion are similar to those for tenure-track and tenured faculty, but with much greater or singular focus on accomplishments in discovery/research.

Discovery

When evaluating the research accomplishments of promotion candidates, multiple criteria must be considered, including:

- a) Evidence of intellectual independence, leadership, and collaboration
- b) Productivity, including impact of his/her discoveries on the field, publications, and record of research funding
- c) The quality of a faculty member's research program
- d) Actively mentoring undergraduate students, graduate students, and/or postdoctoral scientists involved in the faculty member's research program.

When faculty are nominated for promotion primarily on the basis of excellence in discovery, the record of research accomplishments is evaluated with respect to all of the criteria listed above and described in more detail in the following paragraphs. When faculty are nominated for promotion primarily on the basis of excellence in learning or engagement, they are still expected to document their record of research accomplishments.

Intellectual Independence. All candidates for promotion should demonstrate intellectual independence in their program of research. Intellectual independence can be demonstrated in several ways, including serving as the Principal Investigator (or Co-PI, mPI, site PI, and/or independent budgetary authority) on externally funded research projects and being the primary

author of publications as indicated in the document. When a candidate's record includes publications co-authored with former mentors, the description in the promotion document of the candidate's research interests should clarify the candidate's significant and distinctive contributions to the research already completed and the research underway. A strong promotion candidate will be identified by a distinct body of research unique to that individual's research program.

Productivity. In assessing productivity, faculty should be aware that primary emphasis will be given to publications in peer-reviewed, refereed journals. Publications in other outlets (e.g., book chapters) may also be considered as indicators of productivity if they can be demonstrated to have impact on par with journal articles. It is recognized that the candidate's research methodology may affect the rate of publication. It is further recognized that the vagaries of the publication process may lead to spurts in publication, although there should not be significant gaps across years.

Quality. The quality of a candidate's research is indicated by the significance of its contributions to a field, the novelty and relevance of the findings, the use of rigorous and/or innovative methodology, the potential to generate new directions for future research, and the translation of research to improve human health.

The quality of a candidate's research can be judged, indirectly, from the quality of the journals or other publication outlets in which it is reported. A journal's quality is typically judged based on various indicators, none of which should be considered in isolation, such as a journal's impact factor, rejection rate, and ranking or reputation within the candidate's area of research. Journals that have only moderate rankings or rejection rates nonetheless may be judged as desirable outlets if they are the most appropriate journals for the candidate's research topic.

Primary committee members will judge the quality of research and publication outlets by relying on several sources, including knowledge and expertise that they themselves possess, the opinions of primary committee members who are or have become knowledgeable about the candidate's topic(s) of research, and/or outside reviewers who have been selected, in part, because of their potential to provide an expert and unbiased evaluation of a candidate's record.

Impact. Candidates are expected to demonstrate the impact of their research program. Citation analyses, as indicated by total number of citations and other metrics such as h- index or i10- index, may be used as one factor to evaluate candidates' research impact. Citation analyses should be done in the context of the citation expectations for scholars at a comparable career stage in the candidate's area of specialization.

Additional indicators of national and international recognition of a candidate's research program may also be used to evaluate its impact. These indicators include, but are not limited to:

- Editorial board memberships and editorships
- Memberships on grant panels
- Consultation with public and private agencies
- Invited lectures and talks at other educational institutions and key-note addresses at academic conferences

- Research awards
- Recognition of a candidate's research in the broader scientific community
- Impact on field of study, practice, policy and society

Candidates for promotion to associate professor should have a significant record of accomplishment as a faculty member, show evidence of developing national recognition, as indicated by the indicators above, and promise of continued professional growth and recognition. For promotion to full professor, candidates must demonstrate an extremely high level of professional accomplishment and must have established national and international recognition for their intellectual leadership and unique contributions to the research field. The faculty member is expected to demonstrate a level of accomplishment that significantly exceeds that expected at the Associate level.

As with the evaluation of quality, primary committee members will rely on multiple sources when evaluating the impact of a candidate's research program. In particular, outside reviewers will be asked to evaluate the impact or likely impact of the candidate's research program.

Research Funding. Applications for external funding as Principal Investigator are expected, although it is recognized that areas and programs of research may vary in terms of available funding. In addition to its ability to facilitate the conduct of research, external funding helps to demonstrate quality, impact, and intellectual independence. Consequently, the primary committee will look closely at the history of external funding when examining the case for promotion. The absence of external funding when coupled with an otherwise excellent scholarly record will not necessarily preclude a recommendation for promotion and the presence of funding when coupled with a weaker record of productivity, quality, etc., will not guarantee it. Competitive internal grants may also be indicative of the quality of the candidate's research.

Mentoring. Candidates for promotion are expected to have demonstrated their excellence in mentoring in discovery or research activities. Indicators may include mentoring of undergraduate students, graduate students, and/or postdoctoral scientists in discovery activities, mentee recognition and success.

Evidence of addressing access, fairness, and a welcoming environment in research with documented accomplishments is valued. Accomplishments may include, but are not limited to, presentations and publications on these topics or active seeking of grant support to conduct research that addresses these topics. Mentoring student-led scholarly work (i.e., presentations, publications, and funding opportunities) focused on these topics is also valued.

Additionally, discovery, research, and innovations that lead to patents, licenses, and entrepreneurship activities are valued. Involvement of undergraduate students, graduate students, and post-doctoral scientists in these activities is viewed favorably.

Learning

All tenured and tenure-track faculty who are candidates for promotion must present evidence of strength in teaching that effectively promotes student learning. Excellence in learning will be

evaluated on this basis, as well as on the basis of demonstrated excellence in the scholarship of learning. In addition to the indicators described below, rewards, honors, and other forms of recognition for teaching or mentoring can demonstrate a candidate's strength in learning. Strength in learning will be evaluated on the basis of performance in classroom settings and contexts beyond classroom settings.

Classroom teaching and contributions to curricula

Successful candidates for promotion are expected to have a strong record of teaching undergraduate courses and graduate courses. There may be cases that justify greater involvement with one group of students relative to the other; such cases should be evaluated in terms of the candidate's contribution to the broader teaching and mentoring mission of the department and university.

Successful candidates for promotion are also expected to make significant contributions to departmental course offerings. These contributions may be demonstrated through a range of indicators, including, but not limited to:

- a) the number and variety of courses taught
- b) peer or expert evaluations of teaching, when available
- c) student evaluations, interpreted cautiously because of published evidence of bias in such evaluations
- d) contributions in course or curriculum development to address needs or gaps in undergraduate or graduate education
- e) preparation of instructional materials.

Mentoring beyond classroom settings

Indicators of undergraduate student mentoring and support may include, but are not limited to, leading study abroad and other experiential or service-learning programs; serving as a mentor in campus programs; participating as an advisor to student organizations; supporting students in co-curricular and other activities; or engaging in efforts to improve the persistence and success of diverse populations of students. Indicators of effective advising, training, and mentoring of graduate students or postdoctoral scientists may include personalized training efforts (e.g., supervising internships), or leading professional workshops on topics that pertain to success in an academic or research career (e.g., obtaining research funding, adopting new analytic techniques, increasing teaching effectiveness). In addition, successful candidates can show their commitment to active and responsive mentoring, advising, and support of students by making efforts to increase the relevance of course material to student success in research or professional activities.

Also valued is leading or actively contributing to efforts that promote access, fairness, and a welcoming climate in teaching and instruction, demonstrated through distinct and documented accomplishments.

The scholarship of learning

For some tenure-track and tenured faculty, a nomination for promotion based on accomplishments in promoting student learning may be warranted. Successful candidates will be expected to demonstrate excellence in the scholarship of learning in nutrition science. Standards of such excellence are similar to those used to evaluate the standards of excellence in

discovery. Specifically, the candidate will be expected to demonstrate a record of refereed publications on teaching, be developing (for promotion to associate professor) or have developed (for promotion to full professor) a national or international reputation on teaching or instruction and have developed instructional innovations that have been adopted by other institutions. Examples of such innovations may also include a widely-adopted and well-regarded textbook introducing a new framework, record of consistent publications in pedagogical journals, instructional materials or media with wide adoption, or products that enhance student learning. Other indicators of reputation can include keynote addresses at national or international teaching conferences or invitations to deliver special workshops on pedagogy. In all cases, the impact of the individual's work should be well-documented, considering that it will serve as the primary focus of review.

Engagement

Almost all tenured and tenure-track faculty in the Department seek promotion based on discovery. However, when warranted, faculty may seek promotion based on excellence in engagement. Excellence in engagement may be demonstrated through developing and documenting the implementation of practices that improve people's lives, communities, and societies (e.g., technical reports written in collaboration with community or other partners; laws, policies, guidelines, or standards for licensing). Candidates seeking promotion primarily based on engagement are expected to contribute to the scholarly literature on engagement and/or the scholarly literature on the dissemination of expert knowledge. A faculty member nominated for promotion on the basis of engagement requires a record of engagement publications comparable to the research publications of a faculty member promoted on the basis of discovery. Indicators of such impact are likely to be derived from contexts beyond academic disciplines. Discovery and innovations related to engagement that lead to patents, licenses, and entrepreneurship activities are examples. Involvement of undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral scientists in these activities is viewed favorably.

Leading or actively contributing to efforts that promote access, fairness, and a welcoming climate with distinct and documented accomplishments is one valued expression of excellence in engagement. State, national, or international dissemination related to the work is required for this work to contribute to promotion.

Given Purdue's land-grant mission, it is expected that faculty candidates will endeavor to disseminate their research findings beyond scholarly publications, for example, by contributing to articles written about their research in national newspapers and magazines, giving talks to community or lay audiences, etc. In addition, all faculty are expected to contribute to service activities that sustain campus units and professional organizations.

With regard to service, tenured and tenure-track faculty are expected to share in the support functions that are necessary to sustain academic units, research institutions, professional organizations, and funding agencies. Service to the department involves such activities as participating in the work of departmental committees and providing support for the department's undergraduate and graduate programs. Participation in comparable college- and university-level activities is also expected. Service to professional or governmental

organizations can involve holding an official position or acting in other ways as a leader in state, national, or international societies.

Because the department is committed to facilitating the development of faculty, assistant professors are expected to do a modest amount of service activities, as compared with associate and full professors. Candidates for full professor should exhibit demonstrable leadership in service to the department, university, or profession.

Because engagement has not been a primary responsibility of tenure-track or tenured faculty in the Department it has very rarely been considered as the basis of a nomination for promotion. But if tenure-track or tenured faculty were considered for promotion based on their excellence in engagement, they would be expected to demonstrate a record of highly impactful engagement-related activities in which they played a crucial role. These activities might involve a partnership with a specific community or organization outside the university in which there is a mutually-beneficial exchange of knowledge. For example, these faculty might provide evidence of developing and implementing evidence-based programs, interventions, or techniques that have positively affected the quality of life of people in a community. Alternatively, they might have formed partnerships with community, government, or public sector organizations that resulted in new laws or policies that improved people's lives, or they have been a leader in organizations that promoted substantial changes in professional practice nationally and/or internationally.