

Department of African and African American Studies
School of Letters, Arts, and Sciences
Metropolitan State University of Denver

EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR RETENTION, TENURE AND PROMOTION OF
TENURE-TRACK FACULTY (2012)

Introduction

In keeping with Section V of the Metropolitan State University of Denver *Handbook for Professional Personnel (Handbook)*, approved by the Board of Trustees on June 1, 2011, the tenure-track faculty of the Department of African and African American Studies (AAS) will be evaluated in three areas of performance: teaching, scholarly activities and service. The following guidelines are designed to be both cumulative and holistic, providing a framework for what an individual faculty member must accomplish in order to achieve tenure. In that regard, it is important to note that the “Meets Standards” designation is sufficient to achieve tenure, although individual AAS faculty are encouraged to strive for the “Exceeds Standards” designation.

The individual candidate for tenure will provide evidence for such an evaluation via an electronic portfolio on Digital Measures. The materials contained in such a portfolio will include: an annotated CV; a 3-8 page narrative essay; all previous review letters; all student ratings of instruction (SRIs); a summative peer observation; reassigned time evaluations and reports (if applicable); additional materials for review (including syllabi, scholarly and/or creative work, recommendation letters, etc.); and if necessary, materials addressing a previous year’s review. The levels of review for the tenure candidate include: the AAS RTP committee; the department chair; the School of Letters, Arts and Sciences (LAS) RTP Committee; the Dean of LAS; the University RTP Committee; the Provost; the President; and the Board of Trustees. If the faculty member and department chair disagree on the rating(s), both parties should adhere to the procedure outlined in Chapter V, section F of the *Handbook*.

Note on the narrative: the tenure candidate should write a narrative that clearly explains their role as a faculty member in a multidisciplinary department such as AAS. Although listed as three separate areas of evaluation, teaching, scholarly activities and service often interact and inform one another quite tangibly. When possible, this interplay should be discussed in the portfolio narrative, as well as the ways in which the faculty member has grown along the path to tenure.

Departmental Overview

The 40-plus years history of AAS dates back to 1969, with the groundbreaking work of Dr. Wilton Flemon and legendary Professor Rachel B. Noel. AAS offers a major, a major with elementary education licensure, a major with secondary social studies licensure, and a minor. Furthermore, we provide a range of courses that provide students with an engaging curriculum that addresses various dimensions of the global African experience. Our graduates not only receive a solid foundation of knowledge about the contributions of peoples of African descent throughout history, but also, a critical lens with which to confront the challenges facing contemporary Black communities worldwide. In addition to offering a degree program, AAS offers several courses that satisfy the University's General Studies and Multicultural requirements. Students also have opportunities to get involved with the community at large through internships. In the best tradition of the field, members of the AAS faculty place top priority on providing a rewarding educational experience to all students.

Departmental Goals

1. Offer a high-quality interdisciplinary field of study with an African, African American or Caribbean focus, leading to a Bachelor's degree or minor in African American Studies
2. Challenge distortions about Africa and Blacks worldwide through courses that highlight their rich heritage, achievements and cultural contributions to human civilization
3. Provide students with the skills, sensitivities, and knowledge that will enable them to function more intelligently in a diverse society
4. Develop and produce scholars committed to academic excellence and social responsibility in the United States who are prepared to build bridges with other cultural groups in the global space
5. Enhance (through traditional, hybrid and fully online courses, study abroad, domestic field experiences, internships, and annual conferences) Metropolitan State University of Denver's mission of fostering diversity and mutual respect inside as well as outside the campus community
6. Develop linkages with the community at large in an effort to provide opportunities for faculty and students to contribute professionally and personally to its betterment
7. Organize a variety of co-curricular activities on and off-campus that support the aforementioned departmental goals

1. Evaluation Standards for Teaching

Teaching is the act of creating and maintaining an environment that enhances opportunities for student learning and discipline-related growth; it includes advising

students to facilitate graduation and to transition to post-baccalaureate careers or further educational opportunities.

Effective teachers display knowledge of African and African American Studies in the relevant learning environment (classroom, online, hybrid, field work, internship supervision, etc.), which typically includes the skills, competencies, and knowledge in the field of AAS for which the faculty member has received advanced education, training, or experience.

Guideline to achieve tenure: in the narrative, the tenure candidate must explain her or his approach to teaching from among the following aspects of teaching: how scholarly activities and knowledge are integrated; how courses are designed; how material is utilized to facilitate student learning; and how assessment results are used to improve courses. The faculty member also discusses student advising, linking it with her or his courses, scholarly activities and professional service, as appropriate. A critical issue in terms of advising in AAS is that faculty often engage in informal advising with non-majors or minors. The tenure candidate should note the significance and depth of such “invisible” advising in the portfolio. The tenure candidate should reflect on her or his growth in teaching throughout the probationary period.

The faculty member will compile SRIs using the approved form for all academic year classes with five or more students. Whenever possible, narrative student assessments should be taken into account as well, and especially when there are less than five students. Although only a single summative peer observation is required for evaluation for tenure, the department encourages at least one formative peer observation by an AAS colleague (or colleagues) during each year of the probationary period.

Needs Improvement: This rating simply means the faculty member has not accomplished all of the necessary activities to attain the “Meets Standards” rating.

There is no demonstration that courses are regularly updated with new information, as consistent with the field. Little attention is given to instructional design and delivery to facilitate student learning, nor is there demonstrated use of assessment to improve the course. If teaching general studies courses, the faculty member either has not designed the course consistent with AAS and University expectations or has not done the assessment required by the general studies program. Classes are not evaluated using SRIs or the pattern of SRIs remains substantially below the prefix average. The tenure candidate lacks summative peer observation or the observation does not demonstrate sound pedagogy to support student learning. Finally, the faculty member does not maintain regular office hours and makes multiple mistakes when advising students.

Meets Standards: This performance level demonstrates the minimum required accomplishments for a faculty member.

Each course is kept current through review of instructional resources and the regular addition of new materials, as appropriate. The narrative describes how courses are designed and delivered using multiple approaches to facilitate student learning. Expectations for student learning and performance are clearly communicated in syllabi and the tenure candidate uses student learning objectives/outcomes to facilitate student learning and assessment.

(AAS faculty shall present to all students attending class, within five calendar days of the first day the class meets, a course description, grading criteria, and special notices required by law or institutional policy. Faculty shall maintain test results, grades on other assignments, and a record of final grades for at least one year after the end of a class, or, if necessary longer than a year if a grievance or complaint about the class or instructor is in progress. Faculty should also maintain records relating to any factor considered in grading for at least one year. For example, if the instructor requires that a student attend 90% of the classes in order to achieve a grade of B or better, then the instructor should keep attendance records for at least one year. Faculty should maintain records relating to incompletes until at least the third week of the semester after the incomplete is finished or becomes an automatic F.)

Furthermore, the faculty member uses professional expertise along with course and/or program assessment results to improve courses. The department demands the most of its students; therefore, the tenure candidate must demonstrate that her or his teaching is rigorous, but fair. AAS places a premium on challenging students to think critically by interrogating texts closely and developing command of prose style by including substantive writing assignments in course syllabi.

For any general studies courses taught, the tenure candidate designed her or his course in accordance with the official course syllabus, meeting AAS and University expectations, including those for writing and student learning outcomes. Assessment of general studies courses complies with departmental and University requirements. SRIs are comparable to same-level courses (lower or upper division) within the prefix. Tenure candidate's SRIs are consistently near or above the prefix average for same-level courses. If SRIs are below this benchmark, the faculty member has shown a trend of improvement toward the prefix average for same-level courses and the narrative addresses work toward improving student ratings of instruction through shifting instructional content and/or design and/or delivery and incorporating feedback from student commentary. The candidate's summative peer observation addresses strong pedagogy to facilitate student learning.

Additionally, the faculty member thoroughly and accurately advises students, using professional knowledge and contacts when possible. The faculty member must have maintained familiarity with requirements for the AAS major and minor. She or he must have established, posted and kept a minimum of five office hours weekly during each

academic term of the regular academic year, provided assistance to students seeking employment, or worked with students in discipline-related activities such as student organizations, conferences, or fieldtrips. This rating can also be attained by helping students with some of the more complex advising tasks such as analyzing CAPP reports or making CAPP adjustments.

2. Evaluation Standards for Scholarly Activities

Scholarly and creative activities are disciplinary, interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary expressions or interpretations that develop ideas, frame questions, create new forms of representation, solve problems, or explore enduring puzzles.

Guideline to achieve tenure: the tenure candidate must demonstrate in the narrative and annotated CV that she or he has made one or more major contributions to the interdisciplinary field of AAS that has been peer reviewed or accepted by a jury. Specifically, in addition to works accepted by scholarly presses, the candidate may have scholarly work accepted by journals such as *African American Research Perspectives*, *Black Arts Quarterly*, *Black Scholar*, *Calabash*, *Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy*, *International Journal of Africana Studies*, *Journal of African History*, *Journal of African American History*, *Journal of Black Psychology*, *Journal of Pan African Studies*, *Journal of Southern History*, *New Dawn: Journal of Black Canadian Studies*, *North Star: A Journal of African American Religious History* *Presence Africaine* and *Souls*. Furthermore, the tenure candidate in the visual and performing arts may have her or his work accepted by a jury panel such as the “Visualizing the Black Condition” exhibition in conjunction with the 2012 National Conference of Black Political Scientists or “The Fire Every Time” exhibition in conjunction with the “The Fire Every Time: Reframing Black Power Across the Twentieth Century and Beyond” conference at the College of Charleston.

Needs Improvement: This rating simply means the faculty member has not accomplished all of the necessary activities to attain the “Meets Standards” rating.

During the probationary period, the faculty member does not produce work that is accepted through peer review or jury review at a regional, national or international level

Meets Standards: This performance level demonstrates the minimum required accomplishments for a faculty member.

During the probationary period the tenure candidate has had a disciplinary or pedagogical or creative work accepted in a peer-review publication or the disciplinary equivalent. AAS is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary department. Therefore, the tenure candidate who does work in the creative and performing arts has had her or

his creative works accepted into a regional, national or international juried exhibition or performance. Additionally, the candidate has had multiple presentations of scholarly or creative work accepted after review for presentation at professional meetings. Other possible scholarly activities would include writing grants to outside agencies, or upgrading training and education, certification or licenses relative to work assignments. The department values scholarly activity that supports classroom instruction and curricular development.

3. Evaluation Standards for Service

Faculty engage in service when they participate in the shared governance and good functioning of the institution; service to the institution can be at the program, department, school, or University level. Beyond the institution, faculty engage in service when they use their disciplinary and/or professional expertise and talents to contribute to the betterment of their multiple environments, such as regional communities, professional and disciplinary associations (African Studies Association, National Council for Black Studies, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, etc.), nonprofit organizations (Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Urban League, etc.), or government agencies.

Guideline to achieve tenure: the tenure candidate must demonstrate in the narrative that she or he has participated in shared governance at MSU Denver, and used expertise in AAS or professional expertise to make an unpaid contribution to professional organizations or the community outside of the University. In AAS, this last point is of critical importance. By its very nature, AAS is a department whose mission is inextricably bound to community service, both on and off campus.

Needs Improvement: This rating simply means the faculty member has not accomplished all of the necessary activities to attain the “Meets Standards” rating.

The faculty member has not made ongoing significant contributions at the departmental, University or community level.

Meets Standards: This performance level demonstrates the minimum required accomplishments for a faculty member.

Meets standards: the tenure candidate must demonstrate significant contributions to shared governance in the department, school or University or within their disciplinary organization; or likewise, contributions using her or his disciplinary expertise to the community outside of the University. These contributions must be ongoing and make a

significant difference. These contributions often, but not exclusively, take the form of significant committee work.