

Tenure and Promotion Guidelines

Department of Physics

Our department members work together to create an atmosphere of collaborative learning for all students, majors and non-majors alike. We hire faculty who share our interest in nurturing this community - in teaching at the undergraduate level, working closely with students, and doing research with undergraduate collaborators. As the Faculty Handbook makes clear, successful candidates for tenure will present strong records in three areas: teaching, research, and service.

Teaching:

The Department expects its faculty to be excellent teachers. Effective teaching, which includes the candidate's ability to communicate effectively in the classroom and to motivate students to think deeply about physics, may be demonstrated in the following ways:

- Faculty observations, including both formal classroom visitations and informal observations such as discussions of pedagogy;
- Engagement of students in a variety of learning experiences such as office hours and the Senior Project;
- Student letters, both solicited and random;
- Student teaching evaluations; and
- Course materials (e.g., exams, assignments, syllabi) that indicate creative and pedagogically valuable approaches.

We expect that these sources of information are consistent with one another. Should there be substantial conflict between these sources, we will tend to weight our own observations and the student letters more heavily than the course evaluations. In reading course evaluations, we will pay more attention to the written comments than to the numerical summaries.

In addition to these ways of demonstrating a strong record of teaching, the Department expects faculty to be successful in teaching a range of courses across the physics curriculum. Improvement while teaching a course over a number of years will be considered positively. Finally when such opportunities arise, the development of courses new to the physics curriculum may also contribute to a strong record of teaching.

Research:

A new faculty member will develop a vibrant research program. Although we embrace different models of scholarship, most faculty build an independent program of which they are Principal Investigator. An alternative successful model is a collaborative program with colleagues at other institutions. In either case, the goal is a vibrant program of research aimed at publication in professional journals. To support new members of the department so that they succeed in this endeavor, we advise faculty to wait until the third year to accept college service appointments, and offer guidance with grant writing.

It is difficult to characterize absolute measures of a vibrant program of research. The following criteria, however, offer a guide to the expected level of productivity in four important categories.

- Publications in peer-reviewed journals,
- Involvement of Hamilton students in research,
- Activity level as evidenced by conference presentations and lectures at other institutions, and
- External funding.

The Department recognizes that the expectations for publication in different sub-fields of physics are variable. The chair and candidates should discuss these expectations during the pre-tenure period. However, the Department expects that at least two peer-reviewed journal