

**University of South Carolina  
School of Law/Library  
Assistant Law Librarians  
Tenure Policy and Criteria**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The University of South Carolina School of Law prepares students for a career in the legal profession, focusing on education for professional leadership. The Law Library faculty is primarily a service rather than a teaching or research faculty. Its members are partners with the teaching faculty and administration in maintaining and enhancing the quality of instruction, research, and service at the University. In keeping with University policies, the tenure policy of the Law Library is designed to contribute to the academic and scholarly excellence of the University by fostering high standards of librarianship.

The responsibility of the Law Library is to acquire and access materials in support of the Law School curriculum, to organize them physically and bibliographically, to facilitate access to them through appropriate technologies, to preserve them, and to provide assistance not only to Law faculty and students, but also to the University community, state government, bar and citizens of the state of South Carolina. This complex mission requires an awareness of technological advances, database files and services, research collections and other means by which the librarian connects users and information. Successful performance of this role requires that librarians be involved in, aware of and responsive to the information needs of academic programs while working within generally accepted standards, policies, and rules.

The Law Library is directed by the Associate Dean for Library and Information Technology. As a member of the Department of Legal Studies faculty, the Associate Dean's tenure and promotion is governed by the policies and procedures applicable to other members of the School of Law faculty. Tenure and promotion of all other professional librarians on the Law Library staff are governed by the policies and criteria in this document.

## **APPOINTMENT**

Terms of appointment shall follow institutional procedures for all faculty as outlined in the University's Policies and Procedures Manual. At the time of appointment, all faculty members are to be advised of the University's renewal and tenure procedures and provided a copy of the Libraries' Tenure Policy and Criteria. Candidates for appointment are normally expected to hold the master's degree in library science from an institution accredited by the American Library Association or in another professionally appropriate discipline. Candidates for appointment as reference librarians are normally expected to hold both a Master's degree in library science and a law degree from an institution accredited by the American Bar Association.

## **TENURE POLICY**

This document outlines the procedures followed by the Law Library in implementing University tenure guidelines as specified in the University's Faculty Manual. Any issues not specifically referred to in this document are governed by those guidelines. The policy statement will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Law Librarian Tenure Committee. Any recommended changes will be forwarded to the tenured Law Library faculty for approval.

## SUMMARY FOR THE CANDIDATE

The Provost's office annually issues a University-wide tenure application packet. Each candidate is expected to follow the format of the packet and is responsible for the preparation of the file. Relevant data for a tenure file include information from the candidate's vita, a statement by the candidate, letters of recommendation and other evaluations of the candidate's work submitted by colleagues, members of the USC–Columbia teaching faculty and outside reviewers, and material written or prepared by the candidate. Evidence of the following must be provided:

- Librarianship.**
- Professional Growth.**
- Service.**
- Research and scholarship (not mandatory).**

## TENURE CRITERIA

All candidates for tenure must demonstrate a consistently high standard of performance in the core professional skill areas of **Librarianship, Professional Growth and Service**. A “consistently high standard of performance” for Librarianship, Professional Growth and Service equates to Outstanding or Excellent performance, as defined in this document. Although Research and Scholarship is encouraged, but not required for the granting of tenure, a record of Excellent or Outstanding Research and Scholarship will be a value added element in the files of those candidates who engage in this activity while maintaining a consistently high standard of performance in the core professional skill areas. Tenure shall be granted upon demonstration of the following:

**Librarianship** refers to competence, creativity and initiative in the performance of professional responsibilities, effectiveness in applying subject knowledge and bibliographic techniques in building, organizing and maintaining library collections, skills in meeting user needs and in stimulating wider use of resources, and development of administrative skills necessary for the operation of the library, i.e., the duties and activities which constitute the librarian's primary responsibilities. Evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Developing library resources through the selection and acquisition of library materials.
2. Instructing and advising library users and colleagues, both formally and informally, in the efficient and effective use of library resources.
3. Extending access to library resources through bibliographic control.
4. Demonstrating effective interpersonal communication skills with library users and colleagues.
5. Using appropriate bibliographic tools to assist library users in information acquisition.
6. Organizing bibliographic and other information files.
7. Developing innovative programs which facilitate the delivery of library or informational services.

8. Improving departmental performance through creative problem-solving.
9. Extending access to library resources or developing additional resources through the creation of web pages or through other technological advances.
10. Ensuring continuing access to library resources through implementation of advanced preservation and conservation methodologies.
11. Providing efficient access to materials available remotely through document delivery, interlibrary loan or through electronic means.
12. Implementing or developing automated systems designed to enhance access to library resources or to improve overall or departmental performance.
13. Pursuing continuing education or professional development in library science or other relevant fields through formal course work, workshops, seminars, etc.
14. Understanding the operations and services of the Library units and their interrelationships and one's position within the Library organization.
15. Communicating and cooperating with faculty, students, and library staff in furthering the objectives and priorities of the Library, the Law School and the University.

Descriptive terms used for tenure in the area of Librarianship

Outstanding: Examples of outstanding performance may include, but are not limited to:

- development of administrative skills necessary to provide leadership,
- taking a leadership role in the provision or development of services,
- demonstrating initiative in the development of new projects and/or innovative programs,
- creative problem solving that improves or enhances departmental performance,

Excellent: Examples of excellent performance may include, but are not limited to:

- demonstrating subject knowledge and bibliographic techniques used to build, organize, and preserve collections,
- employing knowledge of foreign languages,
- translating knowledge of the curriculum and University policies into effective Library services and collections,
- assessing and monitoring changing research patterns and trends in order to anticipate user needs,
- skillfully using teaching and training techniques,
- encouraging others to reach their highest potential by fostering an atmosphere of open communication and receptiveness to suggestions and criticism,
- teaching Law School or University courses.

Effective: Examples of effective performance may include, but are not limited to:

- demonstrated competence in the performance of the primary job assignment,
- ability to follow established procedures,
- demonstrated oral and written communication skills,
- potential for growth,
- development of skills necessary to meet user needs and stimulate wider use of resources.

Unsatisfactory: Candidate's job performance is consistently assessed as ineffective.

Assessment of Librarianship is supported through administrative review, internal and external peer review, and letters from colleagues.

**Professional Growth** refers to contributions made to the advancement of the profession by active participation in the professional and learned societies as a member, an officer, a committee member or chairman, and by demonstrating an interest in and an awareness of current developments in the library profession through various continuing education activities. Evidence may include, but is not limited to the following:

1. Serving as an officer in a local, state, regional, or national professional organization.
2. Serving on or chairing a committee of a local, state, regional, or national professional organization.
3. Receiving recognition for professional activities, awards, honors, etc.
4. Organizing and programming workshops, professional meetings or conferences, etc.
5. Actively participating in the regular meetings of professional organizations.
6. Pursuing continuing education or professional development in library science or other relevant fields through formal course work, workshops, seminars, etc.
7. Demonstrating an interest in professional activities through participation in various continuing education programs.

Descriptive terms used for tenure in the area of Professional Growth

Outstanding: Examples of outstanding performance may include, but are not limited to:

- serving as an officer or a committee chair of a professional organization,
- receiving awards or honors for professional activity.

Excellent: Examples of excellent performance may include, but are not limited to:

- participating in continuing education activities to sustain professional development,
- serving as a committee member of a professional organization,
- demonstrating an awareness of community and University issues and concerns as they affect the Library.

Effective: Examples of effective performance may include, but are not limited to:

- active participation as a member of a professional organization,
- active participation in regular meetings of professional organizations, and
- demonstrated awareness of trends in librarianship through participation in continuing education activities, reading of professional literature, and monitoring electronic discussion lists.

Unsatisfactory: Candidate's professional contribution is consistently assessed as ineffective.

Assessment of professional growth is supported through administrative review, internal and external peer review, and letters from colleagues.

**Service** refers to participation in institutional governance, committee work, contributions to the educational component of the Law School and University, and community service in the interest of librarianship or information transfer. Evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Participating actively, or assuming a leadership role, in library committees, task forces, and other in-house forums.
2. Participating in University governance and/or committee work.
3. Serving as a member or chair on Law Library committees, community committees, review committees, or task forces.
4. Participating substantially in the management of community projects under the auspices of the Law Library, the Law School, or the University.
5. Consulting or assisting in a professional capacity.
6. Participating in interdisciplinary education and/or research.
7. Teaching classes as instructor or guest presenter.

Descriptive terms used for tenure in the area of Service

Outstanding: Examples of outstanding performance may include, but are not limited to:

- University level committee assignments or Law School assignments,
- consulting in a professional capacity,
- teaching classes,
- leadership roles on Law Library, Law School, University and/or community committees or task forces.

Excellent: Examples of excellent performance may include, but are not limited to:

- University governance,
- serving on a University or Law School committee,
- participating on search committees,
- supervising internships,
- sharing of professional knowledge as a guest presenter to a class.

Effective: Examples of effective performance may include, but are not limited to:

- participation as a member of Law Library, Law School, University, and/or community committees or task forces.

Unsatisfactory: Candidate's service record in quality and quantity is consistently assessed as ineffective.

Assessment of service is supported through administrative review, internal and external peer review, and letters from colleagues

**Research and Scholarship** refers to activities related to inquiry and research. Examples include publication in professional and scholarly journals, presentation of papers, reviews of books and other literature, serving as a member of a team of experts, task force, review committee or similar body. Evidence may include, but is not limited to the following:

1. Presenting papers, moderating or participating in panel discussions, reports, etc.
2. Publishing in professional or scholarly journals.
3. Contributing as author, editor, or indexer to publications in any format.
4. Preparing research reports.
5. Reviewing books, databases, software, etc.
6. Preparing bibliographies, guides, or web-pages which significantly enhance access to and use of information resources.
7. Developing syllabi for courses or other educational activities.

8. Submitting grant proposals and serving as principal investigator.
9. Preparing and mounting exhibitions.

Descriptive terms used for tenure in the area of Research and Scholarship

Outstanding: Examples of outstanding performance may include, but are not limited to:

- contributing as author, editor, or indexer to state, regional, or national publications in any format,
- publishing in professional or scholarly journals,
- submitting grant proposals and serving as principal investigator.

Excellent: Examples of excellent performance may include, but are not limited to:

- presenting papers at professional conferences,
- moderating or participating in panel discussions,
- preparing research reports, and
- publication of literature or database reviews.

Effective: Examples of effective performance may include, but are not limited to:

- preparing bibliographies, guides and/or web pages which enhance access to and use of information resources,
- preparing and mounting exhibits, and
- contributing as an author, editor, or indexer to local publications and newsletters in any format.

Not Applicable: A rating of “not applicable” may be used for Research and Scholarship since performance in this area is encouraged but not required for tenure. No candidate’s scholarly activity will be considered “unsatisfactory.”

Assessment of scholarly performance is supported through administrative review, internal and external peer review, and letters from colleagues

## **CONSIDERATION FOR TENURE**

Each year all non-tenured, tenure-track faculty may be considered for tenure. The Associate Dean for Library and Information Technology will write the eligible faculty members in April of each year asking if they wish to be considered for tenure. Unless the right is waived, each non-tenured Law Librarian has the right to be considered for tenure every year. Law Librarians normally will not be recommended for tenure until they have completed at least four (4) years on the Law Library staff. Refusal of tenure is without prejudice with respect to future consideration. The tenured Law Library faculty will consider for tenure each faculty member in the penultimate year of probationary appointment, as defined by the member's letter of appointment. To coincide with the University's promotion and tenure schedule, Law Library faculty enter the tenure track on August 16 or January 1, whichever date is closest to the first day of employment. If notice of a tenure decision is not given before the end of the seven year probationary period, the appointment of the Law Library faculty member will thereafter be a continuous (or tenured) appointment.

## **PROCEDURES - LAW LIBRARIAN TENURE COMMITTEE**

The primary responsibility for the operation of all tenure procedures shall rest with the tenured members of the Law Library faculty, who shall be called the Law Librarian Tenure Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee. The primary purpose of the Committee is to evaluate the progress toward tenure of tenure-track faculty. The Committee shall be composed as follows:

(a) If the number of tenured assistant Law Librarians is greater than three, the Committee shall be composed of all tenured assistant Law Librarians plus sufficient tenured members of the Law School faculty to make the total Committee membership five.

(b) If the number of tenured assistant Law Librarians is three or fewer, the committee shall be composed of all tenured assistant Law Librarians, plus a sufficient number of tenured members of the Law School faculty to make the total Committee membership five.

In addition, the Associate Dean for Library and Information Technology, if tenured, shall be a nonvoting ex-officio member of the Committee. The Committee shall be constituted and shall meet during those years when a Law Librarian announces an intention to be considered for tenure. The Chair of the Committee shall be the senior tenured Assistant Law Librarian.

## **PROCEDURES - LAW LIBRARY FACULTY**

The Associate Dean for Library and Information Technology shall notify each faculty member eligible for tenure in writing at least one month in advance of consideration for tenure so that the candidate can compile the file for submission to the Committee. The Provost's office annually issues a University-wide tenure and promotion application packet. Each candidate is expected to follow the format of the forms in this packet. The candidate is responsible for the preparation of the file.

Relevant exhibits for tenure and promotion files include evidence of the following:

1. Professional performance in areas including the successful instruction and advisement of patrons in the use of library resources, extending access to library resources through bibliographic control, and knowledge and effective use of appropriate bibliographic tools.



2. Professional performance in support of the teaching, scholarship, and service of School of Law and University faculty, staff, and students.
3. Participation in professional organizations and learned societies.
4. Service activities including involvement on library and University committees.
5. Research and scholarship.
6. Experience at the University of South Carolina and elsewhere.
7. Effective oral and written communication skills, as demonstrated in work performance, interaction with patrons and colleagues, and documents created by the candidate.

For purposes of career guidance and development a written evaluation of all Law Librarians will be made at least once a year by the Associate Dean for Library and Information Technology and forwarded to the Dean of the School of Law.

#### **VOTING**

All voting shall be by secret ballot. Any ballot on tenure must be accompanied by a written rationale based only on the criteria established to secure tenure for Law Librarians. The Committee shall recommend to the Associate Dean for Library and Information Technology those members it has voted upon by secret ballot to receive tenure. The Associate Dean shall forward the committee vote along with his own recommendations and the candidate's file to the Dean of the School of Law. The Dean of the School of Law shall forward the committee vote along with his own recommendations and the candidate's file through administrative channels to the University Committee on Tenure and Promotion.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The University's policy is to provide the candidate with the fullest possible access to their files subject to established rules of confidentiality. The proceedings of the Committee regarding tenure cases shall be confidential with respect to all written materials received and all discussions of individual cases. Letters from colleagues, administrators, outside evaluators, and others will be treated as confidential unless explicitly collected with a different understanding.

#### **APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES**

Any Law Librarian considered for tenure and rejected, has a right of appeal and a right to file a grievance. Procedures for appeal and grievance specified in the Faculty Manual will apply.

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