Criteria and Standards for Promotion and Tenure in the Department of Earth Sciences

1. Preface

A candidate for promotion or tenure in the Department of Earth Sciences will have made contributions in the areas of scholarly research, teaching, and service. The measures by which a candidate is evaluated include the following:

- **Research**: productivity, impact, scientific leadership, and training of research personnel (HQP);
- **Teaching**: effectiveness of teaching, breadth and total number of courses taught, evidence of course development and course improvement;
- **Service**: to the Department, SFU, the professional community, and the broader non-academic community outside of the university.

The Tenure and Promotion Committee (TPC) considers the candidate's record in each of the three areas listed above; however, research and teaching are weighted more heavily than is service.

2. Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

A candidate applying for tenure who is an Assistant Professor must be considered for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor at the same time. The candidate must meet the requirements outlined in Sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. Article 28.9 through 28.11. The university has set out discrete criteria for successful applications for tenure and for promotion. In general, all candidates for tenure are expected to demonstrate that since the commencement of their tenure-track appointment:

(a) there has been continued growth as an established scholar, as evidenced by the development of a significant program of research and scholarship;

(b) there has been a sustained commitment to undergraduate and/or graduate student teaching and supervision; and

(c) the candidate has been an active and contributing member of the University/academic community.

A faculty member at the rank of Assistant Professor is normally considered for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor five years after his/her initial appointment at SFU. An important criterion for promotion to Associate Professor is the demonstration of continued professional growth in the candidate's field(s) of research expertise, including recognition as an established scholar. External referees of high academic stature must assess the individual's research contributions and return strong referee reports. The following criteria are used by the TPC to evaluate the candidate for both tenure and promotion to associate professor.

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1 Criteria for promotion of Lecturers to Senior Lecturers and Senior Lecturers to University Lecturers in the Department of Earth Sciences are the same as the university criteria outlined in Article 35.13 and 35.15, respectively [https://www sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/faculty-relations/collective-agreement/CA.pdf]. Thus, they are not included in this document.

August 2018
2.1 Research

The candidate’s research contributions are assessed primarily (although not exclusively) from the: (a) publication record; and (b) record of training of a highly qualified research cohort (i.e., undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral fellows). Other evidence of research output considered by the TPC may include conference and workshop presentations, other scholarly contributions, the candidate’s record of research funding, awards, significant contributions to the private sector, patents, and industrial applications.

The TPC recognizes that faculty in the Department of Earth Sciences engage in a wide range of research activities that extend beyond that considered “traditional geology”. These activities overlap with many other disciplines, including but not restricted to biology, chemistry, engineering, geography, mathematics and physics. The research contributions of a candidate will be evaluated relative to the contributions of other scientists in the same field and residing at the same stage of their careers. Peer-reviewed publications such as journal articles are essential, but other works such as peer-reviewed conference proceedings, technical reports, maps, books, and book chapters are also considered valuable and given appropriate consideration.

The candidate will have established an active independent research program that includes graduate students and has generated scientific publications. The candidate’s research program will have received financial support from provincial and/or national granting agencies, government departments, and/or private-sector companies.

The TPC evaluates the candidate’s publication record in terms of its quality, quantity, originality, and impact. It evaluates the total body of the candidate’s work, its impact, the candidate’s contributions to co-authored papers, and the involvement of HQP in the published works. Measures of impact that may be considered by the TPC include citation of published papers by other researchers in the field, comments provided by knowledgeable scientists in the candidate’s field, and research awards.

The candidate will have published peer-reviewed journal papers or other publications of comparable quality, and will be senior author of some of these papers. Publications of comparable quality include: (a) geological maps and an accompanying report that have been reviewed and published by government agencies; (b) published books or monographs; and (c) refereed chapters in scholarly books and other monographs.

Publications that are not refereed or that are only reviewed internally are not given as much weight as peer-reviewed articles. Examples of internally reviewed publications include abstracts, extended abstracts, and papers in government geoscience surveys. It is the candidate’s responsibility to describe the type and rigor of review to which these publications have been subjected, if they are not clearly externally reviewed.

2.2 Teaching

General criteria for evaluating the candidate with respect to teaching include: maintenance of appropriate academic standards; innovation in teaching style; generation of enthusiasm of students; graduate supervision; and development of academic programs. Teaching effectiveness may be assessed through teaching portfolios and student evaluations. The TPC will take into consideration the candidate’s teaching assignments and the extent to which such courses lie within his or her area(s) of expertise.

August 2018
Teaching contributions include listed lecture and laboratory courses within the Earth Sciences undergraduate and graduate curricula, seminar- or lecture-based courses for graduate students, and courses taught at other institutions. Excellent teaching evaluations are not expected early in the candidate's career, but evaluations should be consistently satisfactory or better by the time of consideration.

2.3 Service

The candidate will have provided service to the Department of Earth Sciences, the professional community, and the non-academic community. The TPC expects that the candidate will have been an active participant in the collegial governance of the University, through service on departmental, faculty, and/or university committees. Consideration is given to the applicant’s contributions in initiating and participating in seminars, public lectures or similar activities on campus, and help provided to other faculty members.

The candidate will have served the larger professional community by such activities as reviewing papers for peer-reviewed journals, serving as associate editor or editor for scholarly journals, evaluating research proposals for national funding agencies (e.g., NSERC and NSF), evaluating tenure or promotion cases at other institutions, organizing sessions for national or international Earth Science conferences, serving on the executives of Earth Science societies, reviewing and editing book chapters, providing workshops, or providing professional advice to the public, government agencies, or private-sector firms.

3. Promotion to Professor

The candidate may be considered for promotion to the rank of Professor if they have demonstrated scientific growth, maturity, excelling in the areas of teaching and research since appointment to the rank of Associate Professor. This is accomplished by satisfying the criteria listed below (and in Article 28-12). Candidates will normally apply no sooner than four years after submitting a successful application for promotion to Associate Professor. Appointment or promotion to this rank requires evidence of national or international reputation in the candidate’s area(s) of expertise, supported by letters from external referees of high academic stature.

3.1 Research

The candidate’s research contributions are assessed primarily, although not exclusively, from the: (a) publication record; and (b) record of training of a highly qualified research cohort (undergraduate and graduate students, and/or post-doctoral fellows). Other possible evidence of research output considered by the TPC include conference and workshop presentations, professional short courses/workshops, other scholarly contributions, the candidate's record of research funding, awards, significant contributions to the private sector, patents, and industrial applications.

The research contributions of a candidate are evaluated relative to the contributions of other scientists in the same field at the same stage of their careers. Peer-reviewed publications such as journal articles are essential, although other works such as peer-reviewed conference proceedings, technical reports, maps, book chapters, and books or monographs are also valuable and are given appropriate consideration.

August 2018
The candidate will be an accomplished scholar with: (a) a national or international reputation for high-quality research; (b) a record of leadership in their field(s); (c) a well-established, productive research cohort that includes undergraduate and graduate students and/or postdoctoral fellows; and (d) a demonstrated record of research productivity that collectively has had a significant and demonstrable impact at the national or international level. Measures of impact include, but are not limited to, awards from national or international societies, invitations to present papers or chair sessions at national or international conferences, a good citation history, appointments to journal editorial boards, election to executive positions within professional societies, service on grant selection committees, significant research contributions to government or industry, and patents. The candidate will have published numerous peer-reviewed journal papers or other publications of comparable quality, as defined in Section 2.1, and may also have written review articles or contributed chapters to books. The candidate will be senior author of many of these papers.

The candidate’s leadership role in science should be documented. Documentation includes how the candidate’s research and that of their graduate students have contributed to the advancement of science.

The candidate will have received financial support from external sources, such as provincial or national granting agencies, government departments, and/or private-sector companies.

3.2 Teaching

The candidate will have: (a) demonstrated a continued commitment to pedagogy through course development and teaching; (b) received good or excellent teaching evaluations from students; and (c) shown innovation in teaching.

The candidate will have served as senior supervisor of many graduate students and/or post-doctoral fellows, some of whom will have completed their studies prior to the application for promotion. The TPC views favourably the supervision of undergraduate students, for example, as field, laboratory, and research assistants, or the supervision of B.Sc. Honors thesis projects. Most of the candidate’s graduated students are expected to have continued their education through MSc, PhD or PDF programs, or to have secured employment in related fields after leaving SFU.

3.3 Service

The candidate will have served the department, the university, and the professional community outside the university. Service to the professional community outside SFU includes, but is not limited to: (a) reviewing numerous papers for peer-reviewed journals; (b) serving as an associate editor or editor of one or more journals; (c) serving as an external examiner of graduate students or reviewer of university programs; (d) organizing conferences, workshops, or sessions for national or international Earth Science conferences; (e) serving on the executive committees of Earth Science societies; (f) participating on grant-selection committees or professional accreditation bodies; (g) providing professional advice to the public, government agencies, or private-sector firms; and (h) teaching courses at other universities or research institutes. The candidate may also have performed service to the public related to his/her fields of expertise.