



Gregg-Graniteville Library

PROMOTION AND TENURE GUIDELINES LIBRARY FACULTY

INTRODUCTION

The Gregg-Graniteville Library serves the entire University of South Carolina Aiken community by supporting teaching, research, and student success across all academic programs. Library faculty contribute to the university's instructional and scholarly mission through classroom instruction, individual consultations, collection development, outreach, archives, digital initiatives, technology, and other services that support students, faculty, and the broader university community.

These guidelines aim to clarify expectations while recognizing that librarianship, like the work of all faculty, cannot be reduced to a checklist or a numeric formula. Promotion and tenure evaluations should remain qualitative processes that encompass the overall quality, scope, and impact of a faculty member's contributions to the mission of the university, the library, and the profession.

This document should be read alongside the USC Aiken Faculty Manual, which outlines general expectations for faculty performance at the ranks of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor, using descriptive terms such as effective, active, significant, sustained, and outstanding. Library faculty apply these same expectations to the areas of Librarianship, Scholarly, Creative, and Professional Activities, and Service.

This document is intended to supplement, not replace, the USC Aiken Faculty Manual. Faculty should consult the Faculty Manual for University-level policies and procedures governing annual evaluation, promotion, and tenure.

The activities listed in this document are not meant to be comprehensive or prescriptive. Instead, they illustrate the types of work valued when evaluating Library faculty. Because librarian roles vary in responsibilities, areas of specialization, and liaison areas, there is no single standard for effective librarianship. Evaluation must consider the quality, scope, and impact of a faculty member's work within the context of assigned duties, workload, and the needs of the Library and the University. Candidates are expected to describe in narrative form how their work demonstrates effectiveness, growth, and professional leadership.

Library faculty recognize that meaningful professional contributions can occur at the local, regional, state, national, or international levels. While visibility at the national or international level can enhance one's profile, significant and sustained contributions at the local, regional, or state level can also demonstrate professional leadership and impact, especially at a teaching-focused regional university. Candidates should describe the significance, audience, and impact of their work so that its value can be assessed fairly.

Library faculty at USCA hold 12-month appointments and are expected to fulfill full-time professional responsibilities throughout the calendar year. Librarianship, therefore, requires a significant ongoing commitment to the library's daily operations, services, and mission, as well as to scholarship and service. Expectations for promotion and tenure should be understood within this context. The requirements for scholarship and service remain essential, but evaluation must consider the scope of the faculty member's assigned responsibilities, workload, and the institution's teaching-intensive mission.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clarity without creating false precision. Promotion and tenure decisions rely on professional judgment, and the influence of librarianship is often collaborative, long-term, and difficult to measure. Therefore, these guidelines should be applied holistically rather than mechanically.

These guidelines apply to all Library faculty, regardless of rank. Expectations grow with promotion in accordance with the Faculty Manual.

INTERPRETATION OF PERFORMANCE LEVELS

The USCA Faculty Manual uses qualitative descriptors, effective, active, significant, sustained, and outstanding, to evaluate faculty performance. These terms are applied holistically and should not be interpreted as fixed or formulaic categories.

- Effective performance reflects consistent, competent work that fulfills assigned responsibilities and supports student learning and the mission of the Library and University.
- Active engagement reflects ongoing participation and professional involvement in scholarship or service, demonstrating steady contribution over time.
- Significant contributions demonstrate meaningful impact, recognition, or scope beyond routine expectations. Significance may be reflected in the quality of work, influence on practice, or recognition by peers or the institution, and may occur at the local, regional, state, or national level.
- Sustained performance reflects a consistent pattern of accomplishment maintained over time, demonstrating continued growth, development, and professional engagement.

- Outstanding performance builds upon effectiveness and is characterized by leadership, innovation, or substantial impact within the Library, the University, or the profession.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANNUAL EVALUATION AND PROMOTION & TENURE

Annual evaluations and promotion and tenure reviews serve related but distinct purposes. Annual evaluations provide a snapshot of performance within a given year and may include developmental feedback. Promotion and tenure decisions, by contrast, evaluate the cumulative record of a faculty member's work.

Consistent performance at or above expectations in annual evaluations generally indicates progress toward promotion and tenure. However, promotion and tenure decisions are not based on a simple accumulation of annual ratings. Instead, evaluators consider patterns of growth, sustained contributions, and the overall impact of a faculty member's work across librarianship, scholarship, and service.

Early challenges followed by clear improvement may demonstrate professional growth, while sustained patterns of low performance may raise concerns. Candidates are encouraged to use annual evaluations as a guide while also developing a coherent, cumulative case for promotion and tenure.

TERMINAL DEGREE

The terminal for a faculty librarian is an American Library Association (ALA) accredited master's degree or foreign equivalent.

LIBRARIANSHIP

Librarianship is the main duty of the library faculty at the University of South Carolina Aiken. It aligns with the Teaching component outlined in the USCA Faculty Manual and is the core professional responsibility of librarians.

Effective librarianship involves competence, initiative, and professional growth in assigned areas of responsibility, together with evidence that the librarian's work supports student learning, faculty research, and the overall mission of the Library and the University.

Outstanding librarianship builds upon effective performance and is demonstrated by sustained leadership, innovation, or impact beyond routine expectations, either within the library, across the University, or in the profession.

Activities consistent with effective or outstanding librarianship may include, but are not limited to:

- Teaching information literacy
- Teaching credit courses
- Collection development and assessment
- Archives or digital projects
- Technology or systems work
- Development of new services or programs
- Outreach and liaison work
- Supervision or administration
- Professional development
- Presentations related to librarianship
- Collaboration with faculty or students
- Contributions to library or professional programs
- Coordinating instruction across multiple sections
- Other work demonstrating competence, leadership, or impact

In a teaching-focused environment, excellence in librarianship represents a primary form of faculty contribution and may carry significant weight in evaluation.

Evidence of librarianship may include assessment data, instructional outcomes, program development, documentation of projects or initiatives, and feedback from students, faculty, or colleagues, as appropriate to the faculty member's role.

SCHOLARLY / CREATIVE / PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Library faculty are expected to demonstrate continued engagement in scholarly, creative, and/or applied professional activities that contribute to librarianship, to the faculty member's specialization, and to the mission of the University. Scholarship may include traditional research, applied professional work, digital or archival projects, or other activities that advance knowledge or improve professional practice.

Evaluation should emphasize quality, scope, and impact rather than simple quantity. Meaningful scholarly contributions may occur at the local, regional, state, national, or international level. Sustained or high-impact work at the regional or state level may demonstrate significant professional engagement, particularly at a teaching-focused regional university.

Evaluation should consider the time required to complete a project, the level of effort involved, and the professional responsibilities assigned to the faculty member. No fixed number of publications guarantees a positive evaluation, and candidates are expected to explain the significance of their work.

Examples may include publications, presentations, grants, digital or archival projects, professional reports, editorial work, collaborative projects, or other professional contributions. Candidates are expected to demonstrate an ongoing pattern of scholarly or professional engagement. This pattern may include a combination of completed work, works in progress, and applied or collaborative projects that reflect sustained professional activity.

Evidence of refereed or peer-reviewed work is expected for tenure, but the overall record will be evaluated holistically. The scope and pace of scholarly activity should be appropriate to a teaching-focused institution and to the faculty member's assigned responsibilities. A sustained and meaningful record of engagement is expected, but no specific quantity of publications or presentations is required. Peer-reviewed or externally validated work remains an important component of a successful tenure case, though it may take various forms depending on the faculty member's role and area of specialization.

UNIVERSITY / PROFESSIONAL / COMMUNITY SERVICE

Library faculty are expected to contribute to the Library, the University, the profession, and the community through service appropriate to their rank and experience.

Service may occur at the departmental, university, regional, state, national, or international level. Evaluation should consider the level of responsibility, time commitment, and impact of the activity. Leadership and sustained involvement carry greater weight than routine participation.

Service may include committee work, professional organizations, outreach, community engagement, or other activities supporting the mission of the University. Library service often extends the University's instructional and outreach mission and may include contributions that connect the campus with broader communities, support student success, or enhance access to information and resources.

Evaluation should emphasize quality and impact rather than the number of activities.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Promotion and tenure decisions require careful professional judgment. These guidelines offer general expectations but are not meant to serve as a checklist or formula. Evaluation must consider the overall quality, impact, and consistency of a faculty member's work within the mission of a teaching-focused regional university.

Library faculty contribute in ways that are not always easy to measure. The work of librarians often involves collaboration, long-term projects, applied professional practices,

and support for others' teaching and research. Contributions at the local, regional, or state level can represent significant professional achievement and leadership.

Strong cases for promotion and tenure demonstrate sustained effectiveness in librarianship, along with meaningful engagement in scholarship and service appropriate to the rank. Faculty members are not required to perform identical roles, but all are expected to show ongoing growth and professional contribution.

Evaluation should remain aligned with the mission of a regional, teaching-focused university and should recognize that impactful contributions may differ from those expected at research-intensive institutions. Apply these guidelines holistically, with attention to the varied responsibilities of library faculty and the University's mission.