TENURE POLICY (& Post-tenure Review)

Tenure criteria differ from promotion criteria. Promotion is a reward for academic productivity at the individual level, whereas tenure is a measure of fit or contribution to the good of the whole university community. Even though evidence for promotion and tenure may be submitted together, tenure decisions will be made independently.

Preamble based on the Statement on Professional Ethics approved by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP):

1. Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it. To this end professors devote their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence. They accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. They practice intellectual honesty. Although professors may follow subsidiary interests, these interests must never seriously hamper or compromise their freedom of inquiry.

2. As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student’s true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance for them. They protect their academic freedom.

3. As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.

4. As members of an academic institution, professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars. Although professors observe the stated regulations of the institution, provided the regulations do not contravene academic freedom, they maintain their right to criticize and seek revision. Professors give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution in determining the amount and character of work done outside it. When considering the interruption or termination of their service, professors recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions.

5. As members of their community, professors have the rights and obligations of other
citizens. Professors measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to their subject, to their students, to their profession, and to their institution. When they speak or act as private persons, they avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its health and integrity, professors have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom.

Statement regarding Academic Freedom (Source: AAUP)

1. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.

2. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.

3. College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.
The criteria for tenure are:

1. Achievement of academic performance in accordance with the departmental/program specific requirements for promotion to Associate Professor, and

2. Evidence that the tenure candidate is appropriately serving the campus community in an effective and responsible manner and has demonstrated a commitment to higher education as described in the mission statement of the department/college/university. Added value through this service and commitment is measured through the ability of the faculty member to both support and enhance the value that the department/program provides for its internal and external constituents. This added value is measured in the following two areas:

   a. demonstrated professionalism by earning the trust and respect of others by establishing an atmosphere of open cooperation through effective and collegial interpersonal and professional skills that are constructive to the academic community, (internal and external letters of reference, comments from the tenure and promotion committee are examples of support information) and

   b. demonstrated initiative by expanding and improving the current state of the department/program through the creation and maintenance of activities appropriate to the department/program mission.

A tenure-track faculty member will be evaluated for tenure no later than during the sixth year at Western Kentucky University. Faculty members whose initial appointment begins in January do not count that first (spring) semester toward this six-year requirement. One-year extensions to this six-year program may be granted by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for faculty who are granted extended leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), faculty in the military reserves who are called to active duty, or similar unavoidable event. This extension must be in writing.

In exceptional circumstances, faculty may apply for tenure before completing five years time-in-rank. Unsuccessful early tenure applicants may still apply for tenure through their sixth year without prejudice, provided the annual continuance process grants them the opportunity.

Although this tenure policy applies to all tenure-track faculty, whether going for tenure or for consideration in post-tenure review, in Ogden College of Science and Engineering, the path for consideration for tenure is through departmental promotion and tenure committees, department heads, the dean and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.