Tenure and Promotion Policy
Odum Library
Valdosta State University

Odum Library’s performance expectations emphasize excellence in librarianship, service to the profession and university, and scholarship.

This policy situates Odum Library above many of our peer institutions in criteria for scholarship, moving us nationally into the top quartile of requirements for schools in our category.

Statement on the Terminal Professional Degree for Academic Librarians

The Master's Degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association, or from a program in a country with a formal accreditation process as identified by ALA’s Human Resource Development and Recruitment Office, is the appropriate terminal professional degree for academic librarians. [http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/statementterminal]

This is an international standard on qualification for an academic faculty librarian in the United States.

1. Composition of the Library Tenure and Promotion Committee
   a. Odum Library’s Tenure and Promotion Committee is chaired by the University Librarian, who holds a non-voting, facilitator position. All tenured members of the library faculty are eligible to sit on the committee.
   b. All tenured members of the library faculty can vote on all tenure decisions and for promotions to assistant professor.
   c. Librarians at the rank of associate professor and full professor may vote for promotions to associate professor.
   d. Librarians at the rank of associate professor may vote for promotions to full professor, joined by two full professors from outside the library faculty with strong backgrounds in library science, until such time as three full professors are a part of the library faculty.

2. Timeline and Levels of Review
   a. The University Tenure and Promotion Committee (UTPC) and the campus academic administration control the timeline for promotion and tenure at Valdosta State University.
   b. The University Librarian will inform library faculty of all internal deadlines each year by September 1.
   c. There are up to three levels of review for faculty librarians: the department head, if applicable, the Library Tenure and Promotion Committee, and the University Librarian. At each level, a summative recommendation letter will be written and included in the candidate’s dossier to move forward to the next level of review. All letters will be forwarded to the UTPC for university-wide review.
3. **Faculty Appointment**

   a. The rank upon appointment must be consistent with the position announcement. A position announced at a starting rank of instructor or assistant professor may not be filled at the rank of associate professor.

   b. All persons appointed as library faculty must have the Master’s in Library Science, and show potential for a promising career in library science. Specific requirements beyond these are determined by library administration and the search committee.

3.1. **Librarians may be appointed at the rank of Instructor.** This is an entry-level appointment, requiring the Master’s in Library Science with no experience or other graduate degrees.

3.2. **Appointment at the rank of Assistant Professor** requires the conditions above as well as either

   a) Minimum three years of professional experience in the field of librarianship that evidence significant contribution to the profession OR

   b) A second Master’s degree (or doctorate) in a related field.

   NOTE: Having both the second advanced degree and professional experience may qualify the candidate for the award of pre-probationary credit towards tenure at the time of appointment. See “Pre-Probationary Credit” below.

3.3. **Appointment at the rank of Associate Professor** is rare; it is only possible when

   a) The position has been advertised to include such an appointment,

   b) The applicant has five or more years of service at the rank of Assistant Professor or above at another institution, and

   c) The applicant shows evidence of substantial professional contributions

3.4. **Pre-Probationary Credit**

   At the time of appointment, up to three years of credit towards tenure may be allowed for service in tenure-track positions at other institutions (Faculty Handbook, “Tenure”).

   As a guideline in assigning pre-probationary credit, some departments on campus award a new faculty member up to three years of service towards tenure for service at another institution if the faculty member earned tenure there. The faculty member may be awarded up to two years if he/she did not have tenure at a previous institution. These awards are unusual and should be considered the exception rather than the rule.

4. **Faculty Tenure**
Tenure represents a substantial commitment of the institution to the faculty member and, as such, comes as a result of serious evaluation on behalf of the institution and careful preparation by the faculty member. Guidelines and Qualifications for Tenure are outlined below:

a) A faculty member may apply for tenure during the Fall semester of his/her fifth year of service at the rank of Assistant Professor.
b) A faculty member must apply for tenure by the Fall semester of his/her sixth year at the rank of Assistant Professor.
c) If the librarian was appointed at the rank of Instructor, the five years towards tenure starts with that librarian’s promotion to Assistant Professor. A faculty member appointed at the rank of Instructor promoted to Assistant Professor but not receiving credit towards tenure at the time of promotion to Assistant Professor, has a total of ten years to achieve tenure.
d) A faculty member appointed at the rank of Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor has a total of six years to achieve tenure.

5. **Pre-Tenure Review**

a) Two years before a faculty member becomes eligible for tenure according to the timeline above, the faculty member makes a dossier available to the department head, if applicable, the Library Tenure and Promotion Committee, and the University Librarian including evidence of “Superior Teaching, Outstanding Service to the Institution, Academic Achievement, and Professional Growth and Development,” as defined by the Board of Regents in Section 803. The UTPC describes these areas as “teaching and student learning,” “scholarship,” and “service,” thus conflating several of the BOR categories.

b) The faculty member will receive written feedback from the Library Tenure and Promotion Committee on his or her progress towards tenure. A positive response at Pre-Tenure Review does not guarantee the granting of tenure. For more information refer to the VSU Faculty Handbook (http://www.valdosta.edu/facsen/handbook/)

6. **Tenure Review**

Approximately two years after Pre-Tenure Review, the faculty member may apply for Tenure Review. See the appropriate sections of the VSU Faculty Handbook: Tenure, and the Board of Regents Policy Manual, Sections 803.09 and 803.0901 for a full discussion of the tenure process.

7. **Qualifications for Tenure**

a) Satisfactory documented performance of primary faculty assignment
b) Membership and committee service in state/national professional organizations
c) Membership on campus committees
d) Membership on library committees
e) Minimum two presentations at professional conferences
f) Minimum one peer reviewed article or book chapter, authorship of a monograph, OR one peer reviewed creative activity (see Appendix 2)

g) Service activities

h) Work towards a second graduate degree to be completed before promotion to associate professor (encouraged, but not required)

i) Evidence of projects seeking internal and external grant funding (encouraged, but not required)

In any discussion of tenure, it is necessary to state that eligibility for tenure, relative to rank and years in service, does not imply/guarantee readiness for tenure.

8. Post-Tenure Review

a) Librarians undergo Post-Tenure Review every five years after the most recent personnel action.


9. Promotion

9.1. Promotion from the rank of Instructor to Assistant Professor

Prior to promotion to assistant professor the candidate will show:

a) Satisfactory documented performance of the primary faculty assignment

b) Membership in state/national professional organizations; some committee membership

c) Membership on campus committees

d) Membership on library committees

e) Work begun towards a second graduate degree (under the category of scholarship; encouraged, but not required)

9.2. Promotion from the rank of Assistant Professor to Associate Professor

Note: for candidates with three years’ professional experience or with a second graduate degree in addition to the terminal degree, assistant professor is the entry-level position.

Candidates are eligible to apply for promotion to associate professor after serving a minimum of four years at the rank of assistant professor.

Prior to promotion to associate professor the candidate will show:

a) Satisfactory documented performance of primary faculty assignment

b) Membership in state/national professional organizations; including committee memberships
c) Membership on campus committees
d) Membership in library committees
e) Presentations at professional conferences (3 presentations required)
f) Minimum one peer reviewed article or book chapter, authorship of a monograph, OR 1 peer reviewed creative activity (see Appendix 2)
g) Campus, community, or statewide service activities or campus conference activities
h) Work towards a second graduate degree to be completed before promotion to associate professor is strongly suggested, but not required
i) Evidence of internal and external grant development (encouraged, but not required)

9.3. **Promotion from the rank of Associate Professor to Full Professor.**

A candidate is eligible to apply for promotion to Full Professor after a minimum of five years as an Associate Professor. However, this promotion marks a pinnacle in professional achievement. It will be unusual to achieve this promotion within five years. It is also a rare promotion, reserved for those faculty members who have clearly taken a leadership role in the profession, both inside and outside of VSU.

The candidate for promotion to Full Professor will show:

a) Satisfactory documented performance or primary faculty assignment
b) A second graduate degree, either the masters or the doctorate, and any additional certifications needed for recognized excellence in the performance of his/her faculty role
c) Minimum three peer reviewed publications or peer reviewed professional activities required, including those for previous promotions, one of which must have been published within the last five years (see Appendix 2)
d) Membership and active participation (i.e., service as chair) on committees at library, campus, state, and national levels
e) Evidence of strong contribution to scholarship supporting the profession through writing, conference participation (5 or more presentations in addition to those at previous levels); mentoring activities, or leadership in projects with statewide or national impact
f) Evidence of grant writing activity or similar large statewide projects
g) Evidence of growth as a mentor to junior faculty and in the profession generally
Bibliography

Numerous documents inform this policy. Candidates should be familiar with all of the following:

- **Valdosta State University Tenure and Promotion Policies and Procedures** (http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/documents/UTP_FAC-final-050111.pdf)  
  This is the document that governs Tenure and Promotion at Valdosta State University. All aspects of this document, except for those of the dossier noted above, apply to the librarian’s application for tenure or promotion in Odum Library. It is also the document that governs the University Tenure and Promotion Committee, where all applications for tenure and promotion must be voted upon after the vote of the college committee.

- **Valdosta State University Faculty Handbook** (http://www.valdosta.edu/facsen/handbook/)  
  This document has the most thorough description of the pre-tenure and post-tenure review process available. The UTPP, linked above, takes precedence in case of any contradictions regarding tenure or promotion generally.

- **Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 803** (http://www.usg.edu/regents/policymanual/800.phtml). This is the overall governing document for tenure at all USG institutions. In some cases, VSU’s policy conflates certain terms, such as academic achievement or professional growth into simply scholarship. Because decisions about tenure and promotion rest at the presidential level, if there seems to be a contradiction, the UTPP is the governing document.

- The ACRL Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Libraries (http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/promotiontenure) This document outlines the position of the most important professional body for academic librarians towards promotion and tenure. It’s points heavily influenced the writing of this document.

- The American Library Associations’ ACRL (Academic and College Research Libraries) Section has defined general forms of library scholarship according to the Boyer Model here: Academic Librarianship and the Redefining Scholarship Project (http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/academiclibrarianship)

- The results of our 2011 interviews of peer and aspirational peer institutions’ promotion and tenure policies are publicly available from the office of the University Librarian.

- The results of a 2010 national survey of libraries’ tenure and promotion practices are publically available from the office of the University Librarian.
Appendix 1

Contents of the Dossier

The dossier is defined thoroughly in the Valdosta State University Tenure and Promotion Policies and Procedures (UTTP), “3.2.1 Guidelines for the Contents for the Dossier for Tenure, Promotion, or Simultaneous Tenure and Promotion.”

Because of differences between librarians’ primary faculty assignments and those of teaching faculty members, some measures, and thus some documentation, will be different. This policy will reference those parts of the Guidelines where differences can be expected; however, the UTPP is the guiding document.

Section I. Cover Page and Vita Scholarship (Research and Juried Creative Accomplishments)

Same as the UTPP.

Section II. Evaluations of the Candidate by Review Committees and Administrators

Same as the UTPP.

Section III. Teaching and Student Learning

Each Librarian applying for tenure or promotion will include in this section

a) A description of his/her primary faculty assignment (current job description)

b) Documentation demonstrating the quality and significance of the candidate’s performance in the primary faculty assignment. This supportive documentation will differ among librarians in varying roles, and may include

i. SOIs (Student Opinion of Instruction) (applicable to librarians who teach occasional semester-long courses)

ii. In-house surveys evaluating effectiveness of instruction (applicable to Reference librarians and the VSU Archivist)

iii. Reports of qualitative and/or quantitative measures

iv. Letters of support from faculty and/or students

v. A narrative statement

vi. Other evidence of quality and/or significance of the candidate’s work in his/her primary role
Section IV. Scholarship (Research and Juried Creative Accomplishments)

Section IV-A includes “peer-reviewed articles or juried creative accomplishments.”

a. Candidates must include evidence that their achievements demonstrate mastery of developments in librarianship, and the ability to effectively educate others in the field. Refer to the UTTP guidelines for Section IV-A, and Appendix 2 of this document, “Librarians and Scholarship.”

Section IV-B includes “other scholarly or juried creative accomplishments” including professional presentations, excerpts from conference proceedings, grants, and reviews of books, chapters or articles.

Section IV-C includes work submitted, accepted, or under contract.

Section V. Service.

Same as the UTTP.
Appendix 2

Librarians and Scholarship

The American Library Associations’ Academic and College Research Libraries (ACRL) Section has defined and described library scholarship according to the Boyer Model here:

*Academic Librarianship and the Redefining Scholarship Project: a Report from the Association of College and Research Libraries Task Force on Institutional Priorities and Faculty Rewards*

http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/academiclibrarianship

This report provides examples of scholarship in inquiry, integration, pedagogy of teaching, and application. Candidates should be familiar with the ACRL model of scholarship and know where their work falls in this categorization.

Scholarship and the Role of the Librarian

Odum Library’s Tenure and Promotion Committee (LTPC) will define peer-reviewed creative activities on a case-by-case basis as candidates show how their achievements demonstrate mastery of developments in librarianship and the ability to effectively educate others in the field. The LTPC will evaluate such achievements as scholarship, and offer guidance to the University Tenure and Promotion Committee (UTPC) as to their quality and consistency with our unit’s expectations.

Rationale

In fulfilling Odum Library’s mission, librarians practice their profession as clinical faculty, as distinct from teaching and research faculty in a school of library science. Librarians contribute to the theoretical and practical body of knowledge in librarianship through a wide range of peer-reviewed creative activities, which may or may not include studies published in peer-reviewed professional literature.

Odum Library as a point of scholarship and service is itself created and recreated in response to new technologies, changing student populations and user demands, and the exchange of ideas among our peers. It is not unusual for librarians to develop projects or try approaches that could not have been anticipated and cannot easily be compared to past achievements.

Workload and Course Release

The schedules and duties of librarians in the Reference Department may lend themselves to “course release,” providing time for research and scholarly pursuit. However, Reference cannot feasibly provide a course release to more than one librarian in any given semester, as release time necessarily requires either an increased burden on other library faculty, or a reduction in services to students.

Librarians in Automation, Circulation, Cataloging, Archives, or Acquisitions keep circulation and other in-house systems running; provide statistical information for departments seeking
accreditation; identify resources that will support academic disciplines across the university; select resources within stringent budget parameters; track and expend budgets, including library materials allocations; organize and classify resources in accordance with national standards; and supervise full-time staff. These tasks are performed on an ongoing, daily basis, are not interchangeable, and do not lend themselves to course release.