

RTP Scholarly/Artistic/Professional Achievement Guidelines

Department of Political Science

Approved by Department of Political Science: 10-0-2 on August 27, 2018

Recommended for approval by the Professional Standards Committee, with editorial suggestions, 8-0-1, on August 27 (Chair Peter abstaining)

Preamble

The Department of Political Science exercises its prerogative under S15-7 to create department guidelines to “assist committees and administrators outside the department” to understand “standards appropriate to the ... profession” (4.1.5.) Political Science has determined that the standard criteria for teaching and service will serve the needs of our department, but that the great diversity and range of scholarly achievements appropriate within our discipline does warrant the elaboration of department specific guidelines.

Scholarship must support broad range of teaching assignments

The Department of Political Science is a mid-sized department serving a broad range of needs. Approximately 65% of our FTES is derived from general education courses at both the lower division and upper division level. About 25% of our FTES is derived from the Political Science major, and the remaining 10% from our Masters in Public Administration (MPA) program. Each of these three levels of teaching demand different skill sets and different kinds of professional preparation, and yet all of our permanent faculty teach in 2 or all 3 of these levels.

Given the extensive and diverse teaching assignments within our department, we agree with university policy that “scholarship that focuses on teaching and learning within a candidate’s discipline, and which appears in peer reviewed publications, is explicitly allowed and encouraged.” S15-8 2.3.5.3. To this we would add that the scholarship of teaching is valuable across all of the subdisciplines in Political Science.

Wide range of subdisciplines have implications for scholarship

The discipline of Political Science is divided in multiple subdisciplines, each of which has very different venues for publication and the dissemination of research.

1. American politics, comparative politics, and international relations have a range of traditional peer reviewed journals available, but beyond a handful of highly selective flagships most journals tend to be specialized and limited by topic areas. Highly specialized journals may not have high levels of “impact” as conventionally measured by

citation indexes, but this does not reduce their true importance within a particular specialty areas. While publications in highly selective journals are prized, they are not the norm in our department or the discipline more generally.

2. Public law faculty may publish either in mainstream political science journals or sometimes in law journals. Since law journals have different methods for review than academic journals, we expect publications in law journals to be accompanied with an explanation of the review process.
3. Political theory has a very limited range of specialized journals. It is also rare for political theorists to publish in mainstream political science journals. Instead, they tend to rely on academic books, interdisciplinary journals, and extra-disciplinary journals such as in philosophy, education, ethics, and history.
4. Public administration has both selective academic journals as well as practitioner journals—where the “impact” of an article has more to do with helping agencies function better than it has to do with numbers of citations.

Appropriate venues beyond conventional journals and monographs

1. Common throughout multiple branches of political science are books that collect thematic essays. These are welcome, although candidates should document the review process for their contributions.
2. Given the University’s need to cultivate ties to the local media and our faculty’s natural ability to speak on political topics, we view the dissemination of expertise through national and local media as potentially a valuable exhibition of scholarship. Media appearances, interviews, op-eds, etc. need to go beyond citizen-activism and demonstrate genuine scholarly expertise. Such contributions need to be documented and reviewed and not merely enumerated.
3. Given the extensive ties of our department to local and state government and the surrounding community, we view the application of our scholarship through technical reports and advisory services to local agencies and non-profits as valuable and scholarly achievements. This is particularly true for our faculty in public administration and state and local government. Candidates should request outside review of such achievements.
4. We encourage our faculty to retain publication rights so their scholarly work can be republished in SJSU Scholarworks, an open access repository. Open access journals are also acceptable to the department provided they meet all the same standards for peer review and ethics as traditional journals.
5. All subdisciplines sometime publish in academic books, with political theory making the most common use of this format. The format of the academic book (print or ebook) is immaterial, although the authorship (sole or multi,) length, and importance must be judged.

In brief, the department finds all of these formats and venues to be meritorious, although the weight of any achievement will depend upon the quality of the work and its significance within the discipline, sub-discipline, or community.

Peer Review in our discipline and the need for documentation

Some journals, and books published through academic presses, are conventionally peer reviewed. We fully embrace the policy's requirement that "Published or otherwise completed works that are peer-reviewed or juried will normally receive the greatest weight" (S15-8, 2.3.1.4). However, we also believe that many other forms of scholarship that are not conventionally peer reviewed are valuable and in some cases highly appropriate to our mission within a comprehensive, metropolitan university. We encourage our faculty to pursue these alternative forms of scholarship, but require that candidates "request that disciplinary experts provide evaluations of any of their work to be included in the dossier" that is not conventionally peer reviewed. Such "external reviewers must be objective, and any relationships that could compromise objectivity should be disclosed in the evaluation" (S15-8, 2.3.1.3.) For example, a candidate with extensive media interviews, or numerous technical reports, should seek a review from an independent expert from within his/her subdiscipline to determine the quality, extent, and impact of the contributions. Such review is not required for publications approved by review boards or blind referees. However, given the unfamiliarity that many committees will have with the diverse range of outlets appropriate to our multi-faceted discipline, candidates are advised to document whether each achievement is peer reviewed, and should also carefully explain any alternative review of the work which was conducted.

Definitions:

In the following examples, when the term "highly selective journal" is used we refer to one of the top journals in the relevant field. The burden is on the candidate to provide evidence that a particular journal qualifies for this status, either by documenting a low acceptance rate, or high impact factor, or that it is the leading journal within its subdiscipline. Candidates should discuss this designation with senior colleagues well in advance of dossier submission to be sure that there is agreement that a given journal is accepted as "highly selective" by the department.

When the term "reputable peer reviewed journal" is used we mean any journal (relevant to the subdiscipline) which judges submissions by a blind peer review process and is known to publish strictly on merit.

An "academic book" is a book of substantial length published with an intended audience of academics, whether by a university press or by another publisher that caters to an academic audience.

Hypothetical examples of profiles that would warrant a given level of achievement:

S15-7 requires that guidelines provide “hypothetical examples of profiles that would warrant a given level of achievement” (4.2.1). The Department of Political Science provides these profiles while remaining acutely aware that they should be “inclusive and not exclusive in nature” (4.2.2). If a Political Science candidate has achievements that are roughly parallel with the kinds and levels of achievement we outline below, then these hypothetical profiles “may serve as a fair scale to assist in evaluating the level of achievement attained by the candidate” (4.2.1.) But we anticipate that some of our candidates will have achievements that are not anticipated in these guidelines. When this occurs, then our candidates should “be assessed using the more general language of the policy on Criteria and Standards” (4.2.2.)

3.3.2.3 Baseline. The candidate has, over the course of the period of review, created a body of completed scholarly/artistic/professional achievements and shows the promise of continued growth and success within his/her discipline (S15-8.)

Baseline 1. A sole authored article in a highly selective journal has probably reached this level of achievement, provided that it appears to be part of a promising pattern and is not an isolated achievement.

Baseline 2. Several (2-3) articles, whether sole authored or not, in any reputable peer reviewed journals, or several book chapters provided they are peer reviewed.

Baseline 3. A consistent series of reports and technical documents aimed at an audience of political, governmental and/or governance professionals, provided these documents contribute to better governance and are linked to the faculty member’s disciplinary expertise. Such documents should receive a positive independent review

Baseline 4. A combination of some peer reviewed work joined with extensive media interviews and/or public testimony, provided these activities have been independently reviewed and found to have a demonstrable benefit to the public and are linked to faculty member’s disciplinary expertise.

3.3.2.4 Good. In addition to the baseline as described above, the candidate has created scholarly/artistic/professional achievements that constitute important contributions to the discipline and that help to enhance the scholarly/artistic/professional reputation of the candidate’s department, school, college, SJSU, or the CSU more generally (S15-8.)

Good 1. An academic book that appears to be part of a promising pattern of achievement.

Good 2. A sole authored article in a highly selective journal accompanied by at least two other articles or chapters in any reputable outlets.

Good 3. A consistent pipeline of articles whether sole authored or not (4-6), appearing more or less annually in any reputable peer reviewed journals.

Good 4. Some peer reviewed publications joined with a particularly influential series of reports or technical documents aimed at an audience of political, governmental and/or governance professionals. These documents must be independently reviewed and found to have a demonstrable benefit to the public and to be linked to faculty member's disciplinary expertise.

Good 5. Some peer reviewed publications, joined with a particularly influential series of media interviews, editorials, and/or public testimony. These activities must be independently reviewed and found to have a demonstrable benefit to the public and to be linked to faculty member's disciplinary expertise.

3.3.2.5 Excellent. In addition to a good performance as described above, this level requires achievements of both sufficient quality and quantity to establish a significant, important, and growing reputation within the candidate's field. Excellence in scholarly/artistic/professional achievement requires a body of work that is recognized as significant within the discipline (S15-8.)

Excellent 1. Annual publications (5-6), several of which appear in highly selective journals.

Excellent 2. An academic book, accompanied by additional journal articles or other scholarly achievements that are part of regular research program.

Excellent 3. A portfolio of regular peer reviewed publications such as that described above (Good 3) could be enhanced to qualify as excellent if it is accompanied by a series of reports, technical documents, extensive media contact, and/or public testimony. Such documents/activities must be independently reviewed and found to have been of a significant benefit to the public and to be linked to faculty member's disciplinary expertise.