# American University
# Tenure, Promotion, and Reappointment Guidelines Updates


## *Resource 1*
## BACKGROUND and OBJECTIVES


*AU cannot be excellent without being truly inclusive,*
*and without taking concrete, specific steps to improve inclusion on campus.*

**AU's Plan for Inclusive Excellence, p. 2.**


## Background

In 2005, the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U's) "Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions" established the case for why colleges and universities need to move beyond "islands of innovation" and "connect their educational quality and inclusion efforts more fundamentally and comprehensively than ever before" (Williams et al 2005, p. iii). According to the report, changing the demographic composition of a university's student body, staff, and faculty is not enough to satisfy imperatives of justice and fairness in higher education. Nor is compositional change enough to realize the full institutional and individual benefits of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), which include more effective teaching and learning; recovery of what Stewart and Valian (2018) call "missing merit" in faculty scholarship (i.e., excellent outputs that are invisible or undervalued); and a reenergizing of faculty citizenship.

American University incorporated these insights into its own *Plan for Inclusive Excellence (IE)*, released in January 2018. The original IE Plan called for transforming "the way we recruit, hire, train, develop, evaluate, and recognize AU faculty, staff, and administrators to encourage the achievement of our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals" (Goal 5, p. 12). Meeting that objective requires multiple actions described in Phase Two of the IE Plan, released in January 2021.

Most relevant for this library of resources is Action Step 1 under Goal 3 (IE Plan, Phase Two, p. 6), which calls on the campus to "[c]omplete revisions to units' tenure and promotion guidelines, while working to analyze and correct any misalignment of these guidelines with both the norms of antiracist work and the recommendations of the Beyond SETs task force". This includes efforts to "[e]nsure the process of faculty evaluation reflects faculty engagement with meaningful diversity and inclusion efforts and activities in service, teaching, and research" (p. 6). Also relevant is the new Goal 5 (p. 12): "We will foster, support, and promote scholarship, research, and creative works that attend to diversity, equity, and inclusion …,"

which includes action steps to "incentivize … [and] … recognize faculty engagement in DEI in research methods, process, dissemination, and/or content".

American University's Task Force on Equity in Faculty Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure, and Merit (December 2020, p. 6) similarly recommended that academic units "include in their revised guidelines for reappointment, promotion, and tenure guidance on how DEI considerations are to be viewed by reviewers in promotion processes in the areas of scholarship, teaching, and service, and regarding expectations of candidate performance."

In addition, AU's Strategic Plan aspires to advance "AU's overall reputation as an institution that cultivates top-flight, cross-disciplinary research" to address "the most significant issues of the present and future" (pp. 13, 19). With that goal in mind, a subcommittee of the strategic plan implementation working group proposed revisions to multiple sections of the *Faculty Manual* to include cross-disciplinary/cross-field scholarship on a par with discipline and field-specific scholarship (see *Resource 5* for details). The purpose of the *Faculty Manual* revisions was to create space for cross-disciplinary work, but not to require it, so that faculty can advance in their careers at the same pace regardless of whether they focus on a single field or sub-field and/or choose to span fields/disciplines. The revisions were approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees in Spring 2020.

## Objectives

Faculty tenure, promotion, and reappointment (TPR) guidelines signal the AU community's priorities not only to our own faculty, staff, and students, but also to potential future faculty who might consider joining AU and to external reviewers who assess our faculty's applications for tenure and/or promotion. As such, they offer opportunities for making tangible progress toward the values of inclusive excellence and cross-disciplinary impact.

The resources in this library seek to help faculty and administrators translate the commitments described above into practice by focusing on three core goals for updating TPR guidelines:
1. Expand criteria for assessing teaching, service, and scholarship[1] to recognize and reward inclusive and cross-disciplinary accomplishments which standard metrics tend to marginalize.
2. Ensure academic freedom[2] for all faculty by removing needless and discriminatory obstacles to the free choice of topics, themes, genres, methods, protocols, collaborators, and venues (etc.) for scholarship, teaching, and service.
3. Highlight multiple pathways of excellence and impact for faculty.

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[1] In this and related documents, the terms scholarly and scholarship always include research, creative, and professional activities and outputs, as per the *Faculty Manual's* glossary.
[2] Academic freedom refers to "the free search for truth and its free exposition" according to AAUP's 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, accessed 4/2/2021 https://www.aaup.org/report/1940-statement-principles-academic-freedom-and-tenure