

Criteria for Appointment and Promotion to Full* Professor

*Hereafter, “professor” refers to tenured full professor and not assistant or associate.

The standards applicable for promotion to full professor on the **Basic Science Investigator Track** shall be substantial and more completely developed than what would be expected for an associate professor. The expectation is that professors at Vanderbilt are regarded nationally or internationally as leading figures in their field. Time in rank is not sufficient justification for promotion to professor. Rather, promotion requires: 1) excellence in research, scholarship, or creative expression in one's discipline of sufficiently high quality to gain favorable recognition within one's discipline, optimally at the international level; 2) continued high level of effectiveness and/or leadership in teaching, mentoring, and training; 3) expanded involvement in the area of service. Promotion to professor will be justified by the totality of accomplishments since the last promotion. Vanderbilt expects the quality of achievement in research, scholarship, or creative expression, as well as in teaching and in service, to be similar to that required for full professors at other highly-ranked peer research universities. The scholarship of a professor at Vanderbilt should bring honor and prestige to the institution.

1. Research, Scholarship, or Creative Expression

The conduct of research of high quality or other evidence of scholarship or creative expression is a necessary requirement for advancement. Research and/or scholarship includes the discovery, development, and dissemination of new knowledge or understanding. Scholarly activity may also consist of innovative conceptualizations or theoretical advancements. Candidates considered for promotion to professor have already achieved and show strong promise of continuing to achieve a high level of excellence in their contributions to their discipline. Particular strength in team contributions should be considered as highly meritorious. Types of activities that are generally recognized as demonstrative of an individual's stature in research or scholarship include:

- A. The sustained and amplified conduct of meritorious, independent, and original research and/or scholarship, since promotion to associate professor, which substantively advances knowledge in one or more areas of interest.
- B. The recognition by peers of the quality of research or scholarship as indicated by a strong record of sustained research program, the receipt of funding from such organizations as the National Institutes of Health, Veterans Administration, Department of Defense, National Science Foundation, private foundations, and other competitively-awarded research grants.
- C. Recognition by the scientific community as evidenced by invitations to speak at major conferences and receipt of awards and honors.

D. Strong letters of recommendation from professors and/or leaders at comparable institutions.

2. Teaching, Mentoring, and Training

Teaching, mentoring, and training have a central role within the University, and candidates for promotion to professor are required to have demonstrated a high level of effectiveness in these activities. These activities occur in lecture rooms, small discussion groups and seminars, and in the research laboratory. Trainees might include undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral trainees, medical students, residents, or other professionals. To meet promotion standards in teaching, candidates must demonstrate a high level of effectiveness and advocacy in the multiple forms that teaching takes in our School of Medicine, exemplified by the following:

A. Ongoing advancement of mentees toward successful careers within and/or outside academia, as evidenced by their own fellowships or career development awards, and independent positions within and/or outside academia.

B. Evidence of commitment to building diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom and/or laboratory.

C. Evidence of mentoring and advancement of early career faculty.

D. Leadership roles such as directing a T32 training program, being a director of graduate studies, sitting on admissions committees, and directing an undergraduate or graduate course.

3. Service

While promotion to associate professor may be achieved with service mostly within the institution, the level of service for professor should be more expansive and should reach outside the institution and into the scientific community of their discipline. In addition, evidence of the development of leadership roles in multiple areas is typically expected. Examples of this include:

A. Service as a permanent member of an NIH study section, membership of scientific and professional advisory committees, membership of committees within a national society, etc.

B. Service activities that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at the departmental, professional society, and community levels.

C. Leadership in the scientific community, which may include chairing scientific or professional advisory committees, grant review panels, and commissions or task forces, or leadership roles within professional societies.

D. Organizing or hosting scientific conferences.

E. Senior editorial leadership roles such as serving as an associate editor or editor for leading journals.

Supporting documentation you will receive:

1. Standardized Form of the Curriculum Vitae

The Committee on Faculty Appointments and Promotions has developed a [standard form of the curriculum vitae](#) that must be used by faculty and departments in supporting recommendations for promotions and tenure. Use of the standard form will assure that all information needed by the committee is present and will expedite the review of recommendations.

2. Documentation of Teaching Effectiveness

It is required that the [Documentation of Teaching Form](#) be used to specify the teaching activities of the candidate on the **Basic Science Investigator (tenure track)**.

3. Critical References

For candidates whose promotion on the tenure track is based on their research accomplishments, up to five references to publications representing the candidate's most significant contributions should be identified. If the candidate is not first or last author, the specific contribution of the candidate to the referenced work should be described. The Faculty Appointments and Promotion Committee developed the [Critical Reference Form](#) on which to provide this information. It is helpful to the committee if copies of these key papers are submitted as part of the candidate's