# University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine

# Standards for Faculty Promotion in the Qualified Academic Track

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This document outlines the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine standards for promotion within the Qualified Academic (non-tenure) track. The school distinguishes between two designations: **Clinical Educator** and **Research Educator.[[1]](#footnote-1)** Clinical Educator ranks are recognized by SUNY titles of Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, and Clinical Professor. Research Educator ranks are recognized by SUNY titles of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Faculty appointed to Qualified Academic ranks (those with the prefix clinical or research) make essential contributions to the teaching, research, and service missions of the School of Dental Medicine. Although the positions and titles are qualified as being "clinical" or "research," faculty members in those ranks are academicians.

**Clinical Educator.** The primary contributions of Clinical Educators are in clinical teaching, including predoctoral, postgraduate or graduate students, and mentoring of junior faculty. Promotion is based on distinction in teaching, scholarship, and service, with emphasis on teaching and service activities at school, university, profession, and community levels.

**Research Educator**.The primary contributions of Research Educators are in scholarship. Promotion is based on distinction in scholarship, teaching, and service, with emphasis on scholarship and evidence of efforts to obtain research funding. The Research Educator also is expected to participate in the teaching of predoctoral, postgraduate or graduate students and mentorship of junior faculty, as well as in service activities at the dental school, university, profession, and community levels.

All faculty members in Qualified Academic titles are expected to contribute to teaching, scholarship, and service. Regardless of activities and focus, academic advancement signifies attainment of a threshold of meritorious academic and professional accomplishment. Thus, promotion is a recognition of significant accomplishment and never merely a reward for years of service.

# STANDARDS FOR PROMOTION

Each candidate for promotion shall be evaluated relative to scholarship, teaching, and service.[[3]](#footnote-3) To be promoted, a faculty member's academic work must be recognized as important and valuable to the School of Dental Medicine. The Research Educator and Clinical Educator designations recognize the diversity of faculty; because of this diversity, the balance between achievements in scholarship and teaching may vary considerably from one faculty member to another. However, all candidates must provide evidence of significant contributions to scholarship, teaching, and service. The quality of those activities should be unambiguous and unequivocal.

# Clinical Associate Professor

Promotion to Clinical Associate Professor should signify an emerging reputation. Candidates should demonstrate significant professional achievement well beyond that involved in the attainment of the doctoral degree or its equivalent, as well as the potential to ultimately achieve promotion to Clinical Professor. They must show a consistently high level of performance in teaching and service, including clinical activity where appropriate. Candidates also must demonstrate evidence of participation in scholarly and creative activity.

# Research Associate Professor

Promotion to Research Associate Professor should signify an emerging reputation. Candidates must demonstrate significant professional achievement well beyond that involved in the attainment of the doctoral degree or its equivalent, as well as the potential to meet requirements for eventual promotion to Research Professor. Candidates must demonstrate a consistently high level of performance in scholarship, including evidence of efforts to obtain external funding. The candidate must also show evidence of teaching and mentoring students or junior faculty, and participation in service activities.

# Clinical Professor

Promotion to Clinical Professor should signify an established reputation. In addition to satisfying the criteria applicable to the rank of Clinical Associate Professor, candidates must be clearly established, with a regional (or, where appropriate, national) reputation. Candidates must show evidence of teaching effectiveness and a capacity for continued growth as a teacher. Excellence in teaching includes modeling professional conduct for students, colleagues and patients, and recognition by students and colleagues for teaching ability. Candidates must also demonstrate evidence of sustained participation in service activities and in scholarly and creative activities.

# Research Professor

Promotion to Research Professor should signify an established reputation. In addition to satisfying the criteria applicable to the rank of Research Associate Professor, candidates must demonstrate continued achievement in their areas of expertise, and should have established national or, where appropriate, international, leadership in their field. There must also be clear and compelling evidence of increased productivity as a researcher, and the expectation that this growth will continue. Candidates must also demonstrate evidence of teaching effectiveness and sustained service activities.

**NOTE:** Promotion dossiers for candidates for Research Professor are reviewed by the President’s Review Board, and therefore the promotion process to this rank likely will be more rigorous. Consequently, candidates should refer to the SDM Standards for Faculty Promotion in the Tenure Track.

1. **DOCUMENT HISTORY**

These standards were reviewed by the School of Dental Medicine Promotion and Tenure Committee and approved by the SDM Executive Council on December 5, 2023. The document was created based on previous guidelines and borrows heavily, with permission, from the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Policies, Procedures and Criteria for Faculty Promotion adopted by its Faculty Council June 24, 2020. The previous version consisted of a) SDM Guidelines for Promotion in the Qualified Tracks, which was approved by the Voting Faculty in 2015 and subsequently revised in 2018, 2021, and 2023. Those were formulated based on b) qualified tracks guidelines from the Guidelines for Appointment, Promotion and Tenure, State University of New York at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine, approved by the Voting Faculty of the School of Dental Medicine in May, 1996.

**APPENDIX 1: TRACKS AND TITLES**

The University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine recognizes three faculty tracks, as specified by the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY). Titles within tracks indicate rank.

# Academic Track (tenure)

Faculty in the Academic Track are recognized by SUNY titles of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor.

# Qualified Academic Track (non-tenure)

Two designations are used in the Qualified Track: **Research Educator** and **Clinical Educator**. Research Educator ranks are recognized by SUNY titles of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor. Clinical Educator ranks are recognized by SUNY titles of Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, and Clinical Professor.

# Volunteer Track

Two designations are used in the Volunteer Track: **Researcher** and **Clinician.** Volunteer Researcher ranks are recognized by SUNY titles of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor. Volunteer Clinician ranks are recognized by SUNY titles of Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, and Clinical Professor. Faculty who serve in the Volunteer Track are reviewed for promotion according to the criteria for Qualified Academic Track.

**Appendix 2: Example Evaluation Criteria[[4]](#footnote-4)**

**Evaluation Criteria** for promotion include (but are not limited to):

1. collaboration on clinical, interdisciplinary or translational research
2. publication of scholarly articles
3. participation as investigator or co-investigator on research projects
4. participation in journal clubs or treatment planning courses
5. development of new treatment modalities or clinical guidelines
6. teaching, mentorship, and training of students, residents, or others
7. director of a required course or postgraduate/residency program
8. development and dissemination of innovative teaching methods or materials
9. service contributions to the profession, university or school, such as committees or governance
10. invitations to speak locally on clinical topics (e.g., CE courses)
11. leadership in professional, licensing, or certifying bodies
12. leadership in regional or national professional organizations
13. service on editorial boards, or review activities for journals or grant review bodies
14. recognition for research, teaching, or service through awards or honors
1. The criteria and process for promotion for faculty in the Volunteer track, not specifically referenced in this document, are identical to those for the Qualified Academic track. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. refer to Appendix 1 for complete list of tracks and titles [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. refer to Appendix 2 for examples of evaluation criteria [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. These are examples only, and are not to be interpreted as inclusive [↑](#footnote-ref-4)