DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANKS OF RESEARCH ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND RESEARCH PROFESSOR

As approved by the Primary Committee on April 29, 2011
This document describes some factors considered in decisions about promotion to the rank of
research associate professor and to the rank of research professor in the Department of
Psychological Sciences. The official University criteria and procedures for promotion are
outlined in the Research Faculty Appointment and Promotion document (currently in draft form;
as yet unnumbered). The criteria listed below are intended as useful information both for faculty
seeking promotion, and for members of the Department’s Primary Committee and members of
the HHS Area Committee who have responsibility for evaluating candidates’ credentials. The
items included in this discussion are not intended to be a checklist for promotion. Instead, each
of them will be evaluated in the context provided by the full record.

Research/Discovery

The primary mission of the Department of Psychological Sciences is to achieve excellence in
research and discovery. Consequently, the department expects that all candidates for promotion
demonstrate a sustained record of scholarly achievement. The general criteria for advancement to
associate professor and full professor for faculty on the tenure-track are outlined in the
University Promotion Policy (Form 36). With regard to demonstrating excellence in research or
creative endeavor, section B of Form 36 is relevant. The department considers this section to be
of singular importance in evaluating research faculty for promotion. However, the department
considers it valuable to supplement these university regulations with further guidance about
expectations for research faculty.

The evaluation of research excellence involves an examination of a number of criteria. Of
course, there is the evaluation of the productivity of a candidate. However, evaluation of research
excellence also involves examination of the quality of the research, its impact on the research
activities of others in the field, the continuity of the candidate’s research program, and the
intellectual independence of the research program. All junior faculty should recognize that these
criteria will form the basis for recommendations of promotion as they plan their research
activities. Further, candidates should discuss these criteria explicitly when preparing their
statements of current research interests (as specified in section B7 of Form 36).

Productivity – In assessing productivity, faculty should be aware that primary emphasis will be
given to publications in refereed journals. Authored books, edited books, and book chapters will
be considered positively in the context of a sustained record of refereed publications and where
such work indicates evidence of national and international recognition. Textbooks can contribute
to the scholarship of a field when they make a significant and demonstrable intellectual
contribution. However, the contributions of book chapters and textbooks must be documented,
and authored books, edited books, book chapters and textbooks are generally more useful for
demonstrating scholarship at senior levels. Presentations at meetings are encouraged as a way of
testing ideas in public forums and indicating active involvement in the field but will not
substitute for publications in refereed journals.

Quality – The quality of a candidate’s research will be an important component of the
assessment of scholarly contribution. Members of the primary committee have the responsibility
for examining the publications of candidates when making judgments of quality. In addition, the
quality of the journals, as indicated by such things as reputation, editorial board members, impact
and rejection rates, will be considered in judgments of quality. Outside reviewers will be asked
to make judgments of research quality and of the quality of the journals in which the publications
appear. It is expected that these reviewers will be experienced and senior members of the field, holding the rank of full professor. It is natural that evaluators will tend to discount the opinions of reviewers with close personal or professional relationships with the candidate, and therefore candidates would be advised to consider this when recommending outside reviewers.

**Impact** – Candidates must be able to demonstrate that their research has an impact on their field of inquiry. Outside reviewers will be asked to evaluate the impact or likely impact of the research program. Citation analyses can supplement reviewers’ assessments of impact, but those analyses must be done in the context of the citation expectations for top scholars in the candidate’s area of research. When thinking about where to submit one’s research for publication, faculty should consider both the quality of the journal as well as the visibility of the journal. Publication in widely read and respected journals will generally lead to greater impact.

Candidates for promotion to research associate professor must have a significant and sustained record of scholarly accomplishment and externally funded research. Such candidates should show evidence of developing national and international recognition. Editorial board memberships can be evidence of such recognition for this level of promotion.

For promotion to research professor candidates must be able to show evidence of intellectual leadership and impact on the research of the field. Major theoretical contributions that influence the research programs of other scholars are expected. Editorships and memberships on grant panels can also be evidence of recognition for candidates for promotion to research professor.

**Continuity** – It is expected that candidates for promotion be able to demonstrate the programmatic nature of their research. Of course, this does not mean that candidates are discouraged from moving into new areas. It simply means that the primary committee believes that contributions usually develop out of continuous efforts to solve problems.

**Intellectual Independence** – The primary committee recognizes the value of interdisciplinary and collaborative research but believes that all candidates for promotion should be able to demonstrate intellectual independence in their program of research and significant contributions in their published papers. Traditional ways of demonstrating such contributions include sole authored or senior authored papers, as well as publications within a candidate’s research program, and serving as Principal Investigator on externally funded grants. If issues arise regarding responsibility for collaborative work, candidates will be asked to provide evidence regarding their contributions.

**External Funding** – External funding is required of research faculty. In addition to its ability to facilitate the conduct of research, external funding helps to demonstrate continuity, impact and intellectual independence. Consequently, the primary committee will look closely at the history of external funding when examining the case for promotion. However, external funding should not be considered sufficient for promotion. That is, the presence of funding when coupled with a weaker record of productivity, quality, etc., will not guarantee promotion.

**Other Considerations** – Although teaching and mentoring graduate students is not a requirement for research faculty, participation in graduate education may be seen as evidence of research excellence and so may be considered in the context of the candidate’s broader record of research achievement.