

Department of Special Education, Language, & Literacy  
The College of New Jersey  
Disciplinary Standards for Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion

The attached disciplinary standards have been reviewed and approved by the Committee on Faculty Affairs, the Council of Deans, and the Provost.

To avoid creating a moving target for candidates for reappointment, the disciplinary standards in effect during a faculty member's first year of employment will be used for reappointment and tenure applications. Candidates for promotion will use the disciplinary standards in effect in the year in which they apply for promotion.


  
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Department Co-Chair


  
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The Department of Special Education, Language, & Literacy will next review its disciplinary standards in Academic Year 2020-21.

## The College of New Jersey

### Department of Special Education, Language, and Literacy

#### Disciplinary Standards – April 2015

##### **Section A: Alignment with Key Institutional Documents and Values**

The mission of the Department of Special Education, Language, and Literacy is to prepare outstanding teaching professionals who will have a positive impact on children, adults, schools, families, and communities. Our work encompasses a diverse population that includes children as well as adults, and spans different areas such as literacy, English as a second language, speech and hearing, special education, and education of the deaf and hard of hearing. The undergraduate and targeted graduate programs in our department have been designed to align with the mission of TCNJ as a primarily undergraduate institution with targeted master's programs to prepare students to excel in their chosen fields and the guiding principles of the Conceptual Framework of the School of Education which include demonstrating subject matter expertise, excellence in planning and practice, commitment to all learners, strong positive effect on student growth, and the qualities of professionalism, advocacy and leadership. Our goal is to prepare professionals who not only evidence the ability to apply research supported best practices but also embrace the core belief that all individuals can learn.

Our definition of a teacher scholar is consistent with the TCNJ model of a teacher-scholar evident in the TCNJ Promotions and Reappointment Document (2014) [<http://academicaffairs.tcnj.edu/faculty/promotions-reappointment/>].

As teacher-scholars of the Department of Special Education, Language, and Literacy, we engage in a wide variety of research paradigms and methodologies. Scholarship in our department could be disciplinary/interdisciplinary, theoretical/conceptual, and pedagogical or applied. We engage in scholarly research that results in new knowledge, broadens or deepens existing knowledge, or applies knowledge to effect improvement in students and schools. Because our research is predominantly conducted in schools or communities and focuses on human subjects such as children or individuals with disabilities, we recognize that access to human subjects or environments (such as school and home) presents challenges that can inform or influence the trajectory of our research. Therefore, we recognize that our teacher-scholars' outcomes will reflect a range of scholarship that will also be completed at different paces.

The purpose of these standards is to help articulate how our teacher-scholars will be evaluated with consideration of the larger context of the TCNJ Promotion and Reappointment document.

##### **Section B: Categories of Acceptable Scholarly/Professional/Creative Work:**

Because the fields of Special Education, Language, and Literacy are interdisciplinary and often concerned with but not limited to applied research, we recognize that a range of disciplinary standards need to be considered. Therefore, the following framework is intended to apply to a

wide range of programs and will not apply equally to all individuals. The teacher-scholar should articulate his or her own goals, both short-term and long-term, and indicate the ways in which the program of scholarship has advanced these goals.

**1. Clear articulation of the range of tangible scholarly outcomes recognized in the discipline (e.g., journal papers, books, conference proceedings, exhibits, performances, grants and grant proposals, conference presentations, invited lectures)**

We recognize a range of tangible scholarly outcomes that include the following:

- Book manuscripts-published or under contract
- Grant proposals
- Journal articles
- Book chapters
- Conference presentations
- Reviews of books or journal articles
- Internet-based publications
- Program/project evaluation
- Editorship of peer-reviewed journals or special issues
- Editor of a book or journal
- Writing and implementing grant programs and proposals

Collaboration in our fields is critical. We do recognize first-author, single-author, and co-authored publications.

**2. Clear articulation of the range of modes of scholarship (e.g., Boyer; scholarship of discovery, scholarship of application, scholarship of pedagogy)**

Scholarship in the fields of Special Education, Language, and Literacy can employ a range of modes, and we value a range of methodological modes of inquiry. There is a rich history of research in this field that uses smaller sample sizes, in addition to scholarly work with larger samples. The modes of scholarship that we recognize include:

- Quantitative methods
- Qualitative methods
- Mixed methods
- Action research (teacher research)
- Theoretical research
- Single-subject design
- Applied research
- Pedagogical research
- Program evaluation
- Developing protocols

- Synthesis and application
- Empirical or conceptual methods.

We recognize that these disciplinary modes of scholarship fall within any of the following:

- Scholarship of Discovery
- Scholarship of Integration
- Scholarship of Application
- Scholarship of Pedagogy

### **3. Flexibility in support of diverse paths in scholarship/professional/ creative activity**

Teacher-scholars may choose a variety of different outlets for dissemination of scholarship, as appropriate to their own stated goals. All forms of impact are recognized and faculty scholarship is expected to show expansion over time into multiple types and levels of impact.

### **4. Recognition of discipline-specific challenges for scholarship in the given field (e.g., international travel for some fields)**

The challenges for scholarship within the fields of Special Education, Language and Literacy are centrally concerned with the process of conducting research with human subjects, often within applied settings. Much of the empirical research in this field uses human subjects, includes complex ethical considerations, and must go through an IRB review process. Research within applied settings also involves the challenge of accessing participants. This is especially a challenge given that our subjects are diverse (including populations who are from culturally diverse groups, for whom English is not a first language, as well as individuals with disabilities) and involve individuals who belong to vulnerable groups. Research within schools requires district approval, which can be a lengthy process and can result in access to samples being restricted. For some research that involves very specific populations, scholars may need to travel nationally to collect data.

Lastly, some of these modes of inquiry, such as qualitative methods, require a lengthy period of intensive data collection and analysis, which must be completed before writing can begin. Such modes of inquiry can result in rich work, but it is produced over a more extended timeline of data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

These unique conditions for research in special education, language and literacy should be considered when evaluating the overall scholarship of faculty.

### **5. Clarity and flexibility of criteria to evaluate the quality of the venue in which scholarship is disseminated; flexibility to allow for the establishment of new venues and genres (e.g., emerging online venues)**

Within the fields of Special Education, Language and Literacy, we recognize scholarship in emerging venues, such as online or Internet resources and webinars. Such scholarship, when

conducted in conjunction with other recognized scholarly outcomes previously detailed, furthers growth in the field by exploring new boundaries of scholarly dissemination.

**6. Recognition of interdisciplinary work, when it is offered as part of a promotion or reappointment application, and indication of how to evaluate it**

The SELL Department is interdisciplinary in makeup, representing several different subfields within education – i.e., Deaf Education, Special Education, English as a Second Language, and Literacy -- and speech/language development. As such, interdisciplinary research is quite common in our department. For example, research on children’s language development may cross traditional boundaries of “educational research” and “speech/language/linguistics research.” Such interdisciplinary scholarship is evaluated by the department’s Promotion and Tenure Committee which consists of faculty from the department’s various disciplines.

**C. Criteria to Evaluate Different Types of Scholarly/Professional/ Creative Work**

**1. Clarity and flexibility of criteria to evaluate the quality of different scholarly/professional/creative products**

Special Education, Language, and Literacy are fields that have become increasingly interdisciplinary with permeable boundaries. The department recognizes that disciplinary standards need to appreciate the evolving nature of the research in these fields and demonstrate a respect for the individual differences in scholarship agendas that might emerge. The framework given below is intended to describe a broad set of evaluative criteria that will recognize these differences. Thus, we consider it important for each teacher scholar to clearly articulate his or her plans for scholarly work, including how it fits within the context of the emerging trends of disciplinary or interdisciplinary research and the impact of the work.

*Engaged Scholarship:*

A defining characteristic of a teacher scholar is *engaged* scholarship. Such scholars are engaged with their work in vibrant and reflexive ways. Rather than circumscribing their work to the realms of academia, they attempt to make their scholarship an integral part of everything that they do.

*Consistency and Continuity in Scholarship:*

Related to the criteria of engaged scholarship is the expectation that scholars demonstrate an ongoing commitment to their scholarship. While the direction of the scholarship might change with time and expand to new disciplinary or interdisciplinary directions, or new methodologies, it is important that scholars have a productive agenda that is characterized by presentations and dissemination of information. However, the overall quality of scholarship is recognized above the rate at which it was produced.

It is expected that rates of dissemination might vary given the disciplinary challenges in the field. Scholars are encouraged to articulate their goals and the ways in which their scholarship has grown and the shifts that have occurred. The department recognizes and values the fact that

scholarship might involve taking risks, changing approaches, or developing new applications. While scholars are expected to have an active agenda, there may be times of lower productivity because of administrative duties, service, maternity leave, or health issues, and candidates should not be penalized for these periods of lower productivity. That is, periods of lower productivity due to, administrative or other obligations do not preclude promotion to tenure, Associate Professor or Professor. Such periods due to other professional commitments should be addressed in the candidate's essay.

*Impact of Scholarship:*

The work of engaged scholars impacts in different ways. It impacts various communities including the TCNJ learning community of which the scholar is a part, the broader disciplinary or interdisciplinary community, and professional communities. The impact could span different levels including local, state, national, and international levels. Of particular importance is scholarship that has the potential to impact the lives of children, adults, and/or families, and/or on the teaching and learning process.

**2. Criteria to evaluate scholarship in the context of our College's value of teaching**

Scholars should evidence a commitment towards involving students in scholarship. This could be including students in their scholarship through co-authored conference presentations or articles, or participating in MUSE. This would also mean using the scholarship to develop new courses and to inform course content and instruction in the classroom.

**3. Clear articulation of criteria for assessing the contribution of service and teaching/librarianship integrated with a scholar's research agenda (e.g., a faculty member from the School of Education serving on a local school board, a faculty member from the School of Engineering providing written testimony to a legislative body).**

Much of the scholarship in this area is of an applied nature with work revolving around schools, communities, educational policies, and professionals. Service, teaching, and research are not circumscribed to separate fields; they mutually inform each other. This work requires faculty members to bring forth their expertise and scholarship to their classroom instruction, course design, program development, and mentoring of students. In addition, it also involves providing the leadership or guidance to schools, communities, professional and accreditation organizations, as well as state or federal governments. Following are some examples of the service and teaching activities that would be encompassed under the realm of scholarship.

- Effecting positive change for P-12 students, teachers and parents by spearheading local, regional, or national initiatives
- Collaborating with schools or other agencies in initiating systems change
- Contributing to policy development at the state or federal level
- Collecting data through a service project
- Developing research with a service component

Activities that involve providing in service training to schools are considered service rather than scholarship.

#### **4. Distinctive criteria for reappointment, tenure, promotion to Associate Professor and Professor or promotion to Librarian II and Librarian I, with expectations for productivity reflective of the major stages of an academic career**

While the department recognizes the importance of providing some guiding criteria, we also believe that not all of these criteria can be translated into hard numbers. *Quality* is more important than mere quantity. The section below provides some guidelines for each rank. While the section is expected to provide some guidance, it should not be interpreted to be exhaustive. As stated in the beginning, individual differences in scholarship might result in different trajectories or different examples. Candidates should explain the implications of their scholarship and the impact in their essay.

*Application for Tenure and Associate Professor:* It is expected that in the time period leading to the tenure/associate professor application, faculty members will make steady progress towards a clearly defined program of scholarship that demonstrates a carefully planned and thoughtful set of goals and objectives. Whether faculty members pursue a single area of interest or multiple areas of interest, they should explicitly articulate the connections between these areas of interest and their goals for scholarship within the teacher-scholar model of the college. The scholarly record may include publication of one's dissertation research and the completion of scholarly work begun elsewhere, but for which the majority of the work has been completed after the initial appointment at TCNJ. Faculty members applying for tenure must demonstrate the ability to disseminate their work in recognized disciplinary or interdisciplinary scholarly outlets (i.e., in regional and national peer-reviewed conferences and peer-reviewed publications).

*Application for Promotion to Professor:* Promotion to professor requires a sustained pattern of achievement and a maturation of scholarship since attaining the rank of Associate Professor. This maturation of scholarship may be demonstrated in a number of different ways, including scholarship that addresses new or emerging issues in the field, publications in notable outlets, publications of book/s, invitations to publish, present, or serve in an editorial capacity, and successful grant activity. In addition, expanded student involvement in a faculty member's scholarship is valued as an indicator of maturation. Regarding the sustained nature of scholarship, it is expected that a commitment to scholarly activity will be continuous throughout a faculty member's career. However, periods of lower productivity do not preclude promotion to Professor; such periods should be explained in the promotion materials. (See page 6, Consistency and Continuity in Scholarship.)

Below, we have provided a side-by-side comparison for scholarship activities at each rank. The purpose of this comparison is only to provide a guide to help differentiate between qualifications by rank. It includes some significant examples of scholarly/creative/professional activity in support of tenure/promotion, but should not be read as a comprehensive list of requirements. These particular items will apply to some candidates and not others, and there will be other accomplishments not listed here that candidates might include. Given the nature of flux in our interdisciplinary fields, there may be other items that scholars could include in their portfolio which are not mentioned in this comparison.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tenure/Associate Professor</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(The following are sample outcomes)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Professor</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(The following sample outcomes are expected to be completed since promotion to associate professor)</p>
Publishing in peer-reviewed venues.	Continuing to publish in peer-reviewed venues.
Invited chapters	Invited chapters
Presenting at juried or peer-reviewed state, regional, national, or international conferences or professional organizations.	<p>Presenting at juried or peer-reviewed state, regional, national, or international conferences or professional organizations</p> <p>Giving invited presentations at juried or peer-reviewed state, regional, national, or international conferences or professional organizations.</p>
Having book manuscripts under contract for publication.	Having one or more published books.
Writing grant proposals.	Writing and obtaining grants.
Mentoring students in scholarship	Mentoring students in scholarship.
Delivering invited conference keynote speeches or plenary addresses	Delivering invited conference keynote speeches or plenary addresses

**D. Scope, Quality, Importance, and Coherence of Scholarly/Professional/Creative Program**

All Disciplinary Standards must include:

- 1. Clear articulation of how the department/program evaluates the scope (regional, national, international), quality, and importance of a scholarly/professional/creative project (e.g., not all disciplines have quantitative impact factors, but all disciplines can evaluate importance qualitatively)**

Due to the varied nature of the scholarship reflected within the Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy, and the unique nature of building and implementing a research agenda



within these fields, the following considerations are necessary to consider when assessing the merit of a scholarly body of work.

- Collaborative scholarly activities are honored and judged as complementary; therefore, multiple authorship and involvement are viewed favorably.
- Connections between scholarly activities are often not easily visible to those outside of the discipline. Scholars should articulate these connections.
- Research that is narrow in its scope is considered acceptable since many scholars in the department are in fields represented that have constraints with regard to access to subjects or specific environments.
- Single-subject, case study approaches and qualitative methods are used in many of the fields represented within the department; therefore, research based on these methodologies are considered acceptable and important.

Research in Special Education, Language, and Literacy can be concerned with specific populations of students, which can be small in overall numbers. The value of such research is not always captured by indicators that look only at factors such as the overall circulation or citations of a scholarly work. Therefore, we recognize a range of tangible indicators of disciplinary scholarship quality, which can be used to evaluate a faculty member's work. Faculty should articulate the intended impacts of their work and the rationale for their choice of a particular outlet. Disciplinary impact may include basic, applied, or pedagogical impact. The following indicators of disciplinary scholarship quality serve as a guideline for evaluating a faculty member's completed scholarship. While the information below is expected to help generate a conversation and provide guidance, it is not comprehensive and neither is each work under each category expected to meet all of the criteria within the category. Given the evolving nature of the field, there may be other criteria that are not necessarily mentioned below, which candidates might articulate in their essay.

*For journal articles:*

- a. Peer review
- b. Acceptance/rejection rates for the journal
- c. Professional sponsorship or other affiliation status of the journal
- d. Status of the journal editors within the subfield
- e. The nature and kind of audience that the journal reaches. In this regard, while it may be feasible to look at overall circulation in some instances, in other cases, it is not only the number of people that the journal targets that could be used as a criteria but also who the audience is comprised of.
- f. Citations of the one's scholarly work by others is not required but could be used as another means to enhance the scholar's dossier and provide evidence on the impact of the scholar's work. Citations of one's work should be accompanied by the scholar's

explanation of how the citations provide evidence of the contribution of the work to the current scholarly literature. This could also apply to the section on books and conference presentations that follow.

*For books (authored or edited):*

- a. The quality of the publisher and recognition as an academic publisher
- b. Contribution to a book series
- c. Applicability of the book to real life such as textbooks that address aspects of teaching or teacher preparation
- d. Books that provide an original contribution to the field or inform a certain area of discourse.
- e. Published reviews of the work

*For applied scholarly activities:*

- a. Number and scope of reports (e.g., technical reports, case study reports, program evaluation reports)
- b. Impact of the reports and the ways in which they apply current scholarship

*For invited publications and presentations (these would include invited contributions to special issues of a journal, invited chapters in books, and invited addresses to meetings of professional organizations):*

- a. The stature of the editor of the special issue or book
- b. The stature of other contributors to the publication or meetings of professional organizations
- c. The quality of the publisher
- d. The quality of the journal and the extent to which it is recognized for its contribution in the field
- e. The scope of the journal
- f. The scope of the professional organization or journal extending the invitation, i.e., international, national, regional, or state

*For conference presentations (e.g., symposia, papers, posters):*

- a. A peer review process used for the conference
- b. The acceptance/rejection rates
- c. The scope of the professional organization sponsoring the conference, i.e., international, national, regional, or state

*For grants:*

- a. Academic standing of the agency and recognition in the field (e.g., federal funding, national foundations or organizations)

- b. Peer review by experts
- c. Acceptance/Rejection rates
- d. Receipt and amount of funding (grants not funded may be considered scholarly output albeit at a lower level than funded applications).

*For editorial roles:*

- a. Activities in the capacity of Editor-in-Chief, Associate Editor, or Assistant Editor
- b. Quality of the journal
- c. Guest Editor for a special issue of a journal
- d. Membership on an Editorial Board
- e. Invitations to serve as a review or an ad hoc reviewer on journal submissions, book chapters, grant applications, or conference presentations
- f. Membership on a grant review panel

**2. Indication of the value of student involvement in, or the contribution to, scholarly/professional/ creative work**

We strongly encourage our faculty members to involve students in scholarship in diverse ways. This might include co-authoring with students for presentations, research projects, or articles, or participating in MUSE.

**3. Clear articulation of productivity expected (i.e., provide guidepost numbers, not hard and fast numbers)**

As stated before in earlier sections, we value quality over quantity. The numbers below are expected to provide some guidelines.

*Tenure/Associate Professor:* In the time leading up to the Tenure/Associate Professor application, it is expected that scholars will clearly articulate their goals, have articulated their plans for scholarship, and have made significant movement towards those goals. Scholars at this level should have disseminated recently completed scholarly work such as their dissertation. They should have also begun collaborative or independent work on new scholarly projects. It is expected that scholars will have produced at least 6 tangible scholarly outcomes that represent significant contributions to the field (as articulated above in section D, pages 11-13) including at least 2 publications (peer reviewed articles, grants, or chapters in a book-Refer to Section B, item 1, p.2) and at least 2 peer- reviewed presentations at state, regional, national, or international conferences.

*Professor:* By the time scholars are professors, it is expected that they have demonstrated maturation in their scholarship plan, as well as progress towards that plan. The scholar's research might explore diverse areas within the field, venture deeper into the disciplinary core, or take a risk to traverse interdisciplinary boundaries. Whatever the course of the scholarship, the scholar should be able to articulate his/her contribution to the field's current discourse and his/her role as a teacher-scholar. Scholars at this level should have produced at least 7 tangible scholarly outcomes that represent significant contributions to the field (as articulated above in section D, pages 11-13) since being promoted to Associate Professor, including at least 4 publications (peer

reviewed articles, grants, or chapters in a book-Refer to Section B, item 1, p.2) and at least 3 peer reviewed presentations at state, regional, national, or international conferences. A published book or a funded grant proposal could further enhance the candidate's portfolio.

#### **4. Clarity for evaluating the quality and coherence of a sustained and ongoing program of scholarly/professional/creative work that matures over time**

For work that matures over time, the following criteria are important.

Scholarship at this level is based on a deep and sustained inquiry with the area/s of research. It is expected that by this time, scholars have a strong sense of why they have chosen the work that they do and what its contribution is to the disciplinary or the interdisciplinary fields. The candidate should provide a comprehensive explanation of their trajectory towards this level of scholarship, based upon the standards articulated in Section C-4. The candidate's record of scholarly outcomes, including publications and presentations should reflect a cohesive plan of research.

#### **E. Authorship**

##### **1. Clear articulation of the ways in which the department/program evaluates different authorship patterns (1.e.g., single author vs. multiple author) in scholarly/professional/creative projects**

Research in education is characterized by collaborative publications by multiple authors. We recognize first-author, single-author, and co-authored publications, thus acknowledging the collaborative process in the creation of scholarly outcomes. All applicants for tenure/promotion are required to articulate in their CV the specific contribution they made to any co-authored publication. However, the nature of collaboration is such that the work represents the efforts of the team as a whole. Therefore, we recognize co-authorship as a valued component of scholarly outcomes.

##### **2. Clear articulation of how the department evaluates scholarly/professional/creative work that results from smaller vs. larger scale projects**

The wide range of research and professional work represented by the Department of Special Education, Language and Literacy mandates a unique approach to evaluating the scale of any individual's portfolio of work. Larger scale projects are not in and of themselves necessarily considered better than projects completed on a smaller scale. Depending on the existing literature and research, projects that appear small in scale may actually represent significant beginnings to an area of study. The department values the rich tradition of smaller studies in the field of education emerging from modes of inquiry such as single subject design, case studies, and qualitative methodology, and recognizes the impact that some of these studies have historically had in informing policy and practice in education (see Bratlinger, Jiminez, Klinger, Pugach & Richardson, 2005; Bogdan & Taylor, 1994; Harry, 1992). The department recognizes that small scale studies can lend themselves to a deep exploration of the epistemological and contextual roots that underlie educational policy and practices that may be obscured in larger studies.

### **3. Clear identification of the role played by and value of student engagement in the scholarly/professional/creative work**

Student engagement in scholarly/professional/creative work is strongly supported by the department and those that lead to journal articles and dissemination in local, regional, national, and international presentations are highly valued in the promotion process.

#### **References**

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- Harry, B. (1992). *Cultural diversity, families and the special education system: Communication and empowerment*. NY: Teachers College Press.