**University of Colorado School of Medicine**

**Information for External Reference Letter Writers**

**Updated February 9, 2022**

The following information outlines the standards for appointment, promotion and tenure, including the requirements for each rank, definitions of applicable performance ratings used, and definitions of categories of activities.

1. **Requirements for Appointment, Promotion or Tenure**

***Associate Professor*** *(Regular Faculty Series):*

* At least meritorious in:
  + Teaching
  + Scholarly Activity
  + Service/Clinical Activity
* Excellence in at least one of the following:
  + Teaching
  + Research
  + Clinical Activity

***Professor*** *(Regular Faculty Series):*

* At least meritorious in:
  + Teaching
  + Service/Clinical Activity.
* Excellence in two of the following:
  + Teaching
  + Research (or exceptional examples of the scholarship of application, integration or teaching)
  + Clinical Activity
* Excellence in Scholarly Activity
* National Reputation

***Award of Tenure***:

* Excellence in Scholarship ("among the best in their field of scholarly endeavor").
* Excellence in Teaching ("widely recognized as outstanding and influential teacher").
* National and International Reputation
* Definitive promise of continuing, outstanding contributions to the SOM.
* Enhances the prestige of the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

***Associate Professor of Clinical Practice*** *(Clinical Practice Series):*

* At least meritorious in: Teaching
* Excellence in: Clinical Activity
* Local or Regional Reputation for Clinical Excellence

***Professor of Clinical Practice*** *(Clinical Practice Series):*

* Excellence in Clinical Care
* Excellence in at least one:
  + Teaching
  + Leadership of structured projects that have assessed and improved the quality, value or efficiency of clinical care; or leadership of projects that have addressed inequities in the healthcare system, shaped public health policy or addressed community health and healthcare needs.
* At least meritorious in: Teaching
* National or International Reputation for Clinical Excellence

***Associate Research Professor*** *(Research Professor Series):*

* Excellence in: Research

***Research Professor*** *(Research Professor Series):*

* Excellence in: Research
* National or International Reputation

1. **Rating Definitions**

**Excellent (highest level) –** “Excellence” is defined as performance that is “outstanding or of exceptional merit.”

**Meritorious –** “Meritorious” is defined broadly as performance that is “praiseworthy or deserving merit.”

1. **Promotion Category Definitions**

**A.** **Clinical Activity**

In addition to direct patient care, “clinical work” includes development of practice guidelines and other structured projects that assess and improve the quality of clinical care, enhance the patient experience, promote patient safety, and identify opportunities for greater value and efficiency in health care. “Clinical work” also includes activities that address racism and inequities in the healthcare system, empower patients, shape public health policy or address community health and healthcare needs. The School of Medicine values scholarly projects that advance the science and practice of health care quality, equity, efficiency and patient safety. Importantly, excellence in clinical activity also includes serving as a model of professional conduct for students and residents, colleagues and healthcare team members; in turn, excellence includes behaviors that promote the safety and dignity of all healthcare team members and the patients they serve.

**B.** **Teaching**

Teaching is also broadly defined. Teaching includes not only didactic instruction but also mentorship, professional role modeling and supervision of learners in classroom, clinical, research and community settings. Teaching also includes course leadership and administration, development of innovative instructional or evaluation methods and educational scholarship and research. The School of Medicine recognizes teaching of undergraduate students, graduate students, residents, fellows and health care providers in all the health professions. Importantly, excellence in teaching also includes being a model of professional conduct for students, residents and other trainees.

**C. Research**

Basic, clinical, translational, educational and other forms of research are highly valued by the School of Medicine. As outlined in the Promotion Matrix, “excellence” in research may be demonstrated through peer-reviewed scientific publications, competitive grant funding, a national or international reputation, and evidence of originality, creativity and influence as an investigator. The School of Medicine recognizes the importance of inter-disciplinary team science and the need for collaboration among investigators. Therefore, as recommended by the National Academy of Science, the School of Medicine defines an “independent investigator” as one who demonstrates “independence of thought” --- that is, one who has defined a research question of interest, who has chosen or developed the best strategies and approaches to address that question and who has contributed distinct intellectual expertise to successful research programs. Importantly, excellence in research also includes serving as a model of professional conduct for students and fellows, colleagues and research team members.

**D. Service**

Service is a core mission of the University and the School of Medicine. Service is broadly defined as using the faculty member’s relevant expertise, in collaboration with others, to support the University community, the faculty member’s academic profession and our broader society. All faculty members are expected to contribute to the service missions of the School. The School of Medicine especially values service activities where the faculty member has demonstrated leadership and impact. Service is distinguished from, but supports, the teaching, clinical and scholarly missions of the School. Service includes a wide range of activities, including committee work, service on study sections and editorial boards, leadership of conferences, activities that inform public policy, and activities that confront racism and bias, support marginalized populations and promote diversity, equity and inclusion. Service also includes engaging communities and forming academic-community partnerships that promote healthy and resilient communities through programs in clinical care, education, research and advocacy.