

The Society of Architectural Historians

Guidelines for the Promotion and Tenure of Architectural Historians

NOTE: The language for this document was adapted from the College Art Association's "Standards for Retention and Tenure of Art Historians" (<http://www.collegeart.org/guidelines/tenure.html>) by permission of the College Art Association.

Since the 19th Century and in particular since the end of Beaux-Art influenced education in the United States, the teaching of architectural history in architecture schools has, in many cases, shifted from a role that is absolutely central to one that is marginal. The Society of Architectural Historians believes that our built environment profits greatly from architects who have been trained to know and respect the history of their field. We therefore endorse mandatory instruction in architectural history as an integral component in the curriculum of every school of architecture, and the protection and nurturing of the faculty who teach these courses.

The SAH intends this document as a set of recommendations for best-practices with regard to promotion and tenure of architectural historians who teach in professional schools of architecture. It derives from recognition that the role of architectural historians in professional schools of architecture has not always been well defined, and from the emergence of new forms of scholarly publication that now complicate understandings of what constitutes scholarly production. Acknowledging that professional schools vary in size, structure, and funding levels, the document emphasizes transparency of expectations and the necessity for clear communication between administrators and faculty. It is also intended to clarify the significance of both traditional and digital forms of scholarly publication in architectural history and related fields such as historic preservation, urban history, and landscape history.

This document refers to "architectural historians" but its scope is meant to include all faculty members whose focus is the history of the built environment (e.g. landscape historians, urban historians, historic preservationists, etc.). The SAH recognizes and respects the fact that academic institutions vary in their structure and missions. We therefore encourage academic institutions, at the time of initial appointment, to provide as much information as possible to their faculty regarding each institution's requirements for promotion and tenure with updates provided thereafter as necessary.

Status of Architectural History Faculty

All architectural historians on full-time appointments other than visiting professors or lecturers on appointments of one year or less are to be granted all responsibilities and rights of faculty status at that institution. Such status should include eligibility for academic rank, promotion, tenure, retirement plan, and any other economic packages as well as equal access to university support for research and professional development.

Terminal Degrees

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is usually the terminal degree for architectural historians, though a different degree with appropriate scholarly work that contributes to the field of architectural history may be deemed acceptable for some faculty in some schools. However, in some related fields such as historic preservation, the terminal degree is the MS or equivalent and a PhD is not expected in these fields. A professional degree in architecture, such as the BArch or MArch, is neither necessary nor required for architectural historians.

Criteria for Retention and Advancement

The criteria for promotion, retention, and tenure for architectural historians shall be teaching effectiveness, research and professional accomplishment, and service to the institution, the profession, and the community. Evaluation of the published research, teaching effectiveness, and professional service will be carried out with the participation of other architectural historians or those trained to evaluate scholarly historical research. Whenever possible, best-practice dictates that dossiers of architectural historians be evaluated by architectural historians or by humanities scholars in related fields rather than by practicing architects or by architects whose primary responsibility is teaching design studio. In the first stages of the review process, architectural historians or humanities scholars in related fields at the home institution shall be consulted during the first stage of the review process and shall be represented on any department review committee.

Colleges and universities should make certain that their policies and procedures relating to matters of renewal, retention, promotion, and tenure are clear, concrete, and made available to each faculty member when she or he is hired. In addition, said policies shall be supplemented with more specific criteria as relevant to architectural historians. At the time of hiring or reclassification of an architectural historian's position within a program (e.g. moving from part-time to tenure-track), the institution should provide the faculty member a written account of all previous research (scholarly products), service activities, and teaching that will count toward retention, tenure, and promotion. Reviews of each faculty member's record in regard to the three areas of research, service, and teaching should be held on a regular schedule, and at least in the first, third, and pre-tenure year of the probationary period. The person under review should be given full information in writing about his or her status at each review.

Promotion criteria should recognize that, as is the case with other humanities disciplines, the field of architectural history in the United States does not enjoy the wide range or scale of granting opportunities from public and private sources more typically available to scholars in the sciences and certain social sciences.

Guidelines for Disclosure of Expectations:

1. Both the relative weight among research, service, and teaching and at the levels of performance expected in each must be explicit and in writing; liberal arts institutions may give equal weight to all three areas, while professional schools in research universities are more likely to place greater emphasis on scholarly research accomplishments. Expectations for levels of research and publication may differ between universities and colleges, between departments largely devoted to undergraduate instruction and those with an added graduate and research mission.

2. For the evaluation of research, expectations with regard to both the quantity and significance of published work must be made clear.

- Definitions of scholarly accomplishment must be clarified by the institution. For example, if the institutional standard is as specific as a "book," it must be made clear as to whether or not the book must be peer-reviewed, and whether or not that standard has been met by publication of a monograph published by a major commercial press, a substantial exhibition catalog, an edited volume, or a peer-reviewed digital publication. (See addendum, "Publishing Requirements for Tenure and Promotion in Architectural History," below).

- There should be a clear expression as to the level of recognition demanded of the candidate for advancement in rank or tenure, whether local, regional, national, or international, including examples of how such recognition would be met. Such level of recognition must be realistic and consonant with the teaching load and research and financial support available to the individual faculty member.
- Should outside referees or reviewers be consulted as part of the decision process of promotion and tenure, they must be informed of both the institution's and the department's standards and expectations, including the relative weight accorded research, service, and teaching. Recognizing the differences in the mission of various institutions of higher education, the outside reviewers should be requested to limit the review of published (or in manuscript) research to its quality, without commenting on the likelihood or suitability for tenure for the candidate. Selection of evaluating scholars should be based primarily on their knowledge and expertise in the candidate's specific field or fields. Best practice dictates that at least one third of the external candidates be selected from a list provided by the candidate and that the candidate be allowed the opportunity to reject potential reviewers.
- For those architectural historians whose research is dependent on travel to distant locations, usually abroad, there should be clear recognition of the financial and time implications of such travel on the faculty member's productivity. In institutions with high research expectations, architectural history faculty should be granted sabbatical or leave before they become eligible for tenure and promotion.
- The evaluation of teaching should include both student evaluations and peer review. The candidate under review should also be given the opportunity to present the reviewing body any syllabi, examinations, examples of student papers, descriptions of assignments, and any other material relevant to his or her teaching.
- In the area of service, each faculty member should be informed of the level and amount of service expected and whether community service as well as service to the profession is expected.
- Any expectation of having the faculty member participate in the governance of such professional organizations as the Society of Architectural Historians or its local/regional chapters, College Art Association, Vernacular Architecture Forum, National Trust for Historic Preservation, DOCOMOMO, ICOMOS, or similar organizations, should be accompanied by financial support from the faculty member's home institution whenever possible.
- If architectural historians are expected to give public lectures, to speak at primary or secondary schools, or to participate in the programs of local service organizations, the necessity of providing such service should be explicit.
- While service to the department and institution may be expected of even the most junior faculty, it is desirable to avoid making substantial demands on young teachers and scholars; it would be helpful to limit the amount of service to permit those at the start of their careers to concentrate most of their attention on improving their teaching and establishing their research directions.
- Should department or institutional standards or requirements in regard to research, service, or teaching substantially change during the probationary period of a faculty member, said faculty

members should either be allowed to continue to serve under the standards in force at the time of their initial appointment or be given an appropriate amount of time to meet the new standards.

- The SAH strongly urges institutions to comply with American Association of University Professors standards with respect to the length of probationary periods.

All candidates for academic advancement should be informed in writing of the specific time table regarding cases being considered for professional advancement and of decisions made at each level of the review process.

Teaching Loads

The full-time teaching assignments of architectural historians should be comparable to those of other humanities faculty at the same institution (with two courses per semester as the norm at research universities and three at institutions where teaching is given greater priority). Institutions must also recognize that class preparation in architectural history differs from that in other liberal arts disciplines in the time expended on the selection and arrangement of visual materials. Appropriate reductions in the number of classes taught are warranted when the position also includes administrative responsibilities for a department, slide collection, or for teaching studio courses.

Sabbaticals and Research Leaves

Because architectural historians conduct research on site, in archives, and in libraries and special collections, they often require substantial leave time in order to travel and to conduct research. Untenured faculty should therefore be permitted to apply for both external and internal fellowships (when those possibilities exist) that grant leave time. Two semesters of leave time in the probationary period leading up to tenure and promotion should be considered as reasonable and more might be considered in universities that emphasize research over teaching and service.

Mentoring

In order to give the fullest opportunity for success of a beginning faculty member, the chair of a department should assign a senior architectural historian to serve as a mentor. Such a mentor would be available to answer questions and to respond to concerns of the new faculty member, and would make sure his or her work is progressing as necessary to achieve professional advancement. This is especially important to those from under-represented groups who have little experience and few role models on which to base their behavior. Junior faculty members should also be assigned a “coach” who will help them prepare their papers for promotion and tenure.

Addendum: Publishing Requirements for Tenure and Promotion in Architectural History

Significant new forms of scholarly publication—primarily digital forms—have emerged in recent years. Indeed, they continue to rapidly emerge and evolve and they deserve serious consideration. The Society of Architectural Historians has become a leader in the development of digital scholarly publication related to the built environment. The *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (JSAH), the most prestigious and esteemed journal in the field of architectural history, has partnered with University of California Press to initiate a simultaneous digital publication that will include new functionalities and a robust illustration program. It will retain its high standards and its peer-review system. The SAH recommends that faculty who publish in the JSAH—both its hard copy and digital forms—receive

appropriate recognition, and that faculty who serve as editors or area editors also receive appropriate recognition. The SAH also recommends that scholarly peer-reviewed online journals receive the appropriate recognition (equivalent to that of printed journals) in the tenure and promotion procedures. Although several journals have moved to both a printed and an online version others appear online only, but we recommend that when peer-reviewed, they be treated as equal.

In addition, in the field of American architectural history, the Society regularly publishes new scholarship through the vehicle of reference books known as the *Buildings of the United States* (BUS). Co-published by the Society and the University of Virginia Press, the goal of the BUS series is to document and interpret the whole of American architecture on a state-by-state basis. Every book in the series is reviewed by two peer reviewers and is rigorously edited by both a content and a copy editor. BUS, which has won numerous publishing awards for its print editions, will be moving to the online environment, incorporating the same rigorous peer-review process.

Finally, the digital image archive known as the Society of Architectural Historians Architecture Resources Archive (SAHARA), contains features that allow for extensive textual commentary accompanying uploaded images and it is hoped that new forms of academic publishing will emerge from these small texts, which, likewise will be peer-reviewed. Editorial service for SAHARA, therefore, also deserves recognition in the promotion and tenure process. In view of these recent developments in academic and commercial publishing, the Society of Architectural Historians makes the following recommendations:

The academic careers of architectural historians and those in related fields should not depend on the vagaries of the publishing profession and market, where situations shift rapidly, especially with respect to digital publication.

Faculty should be provided with a letter of understanding that makes explicit the expectations of their unit for faculty publication. This letter should clearly state any departmental, school or other institutional policies for evaluating publications, including the evaluation of scholarship disseminated via new media.

The Society of Architectural Historians suggests that colleges and universities consider the following forms of publication and dissemination of scholarship (whether in print or in electronic format) as vehicles of scholarly productivity:

- peer-reviewed journal articles
- essays and substantial entries in museum or exhibition catalogs
- peer-reviewed, single-authored books
- peer-reviewed, co-authored books
- edited volumes and entries in edited volumes
- published survey reports
- textbooks and entries in textbooks
- essays or substantial entries in established non-peer reviewed professional architectural journals (such as *Architectural Record*, *Lotus*)
- articles in dictionaries and encyclopedias of architecture, landscape, and related subjects
- book reviews and review essays
- editorships of scholarly journals or of dictionaries/encyclopedias of architecture and related fields
- original contributions to television or other media content (script writing, production, or narration)

- publication or exhibition of architectural photography or other creative/artistic work
- professional consultation in architecture, historic preservation, or related fields

Further, the Society of Architectural Historians advises that qualifications for tenure and promotion in architectural history cannot be judged purely on the basis of English-language publication venues. Architectural history is an international discipline and American architectural historians routinely publish their work on other continents and often in other languages. As a consequence, the SAH recommends against the practice of measuring the value of scholarship in architectural history by the number of its citations (as in science) because existing citation indexes do not reliably report citations of works published outside the United States.

In addition, the Society of Architectural Historians observes that many journals published outside the United States have selection procedures that do not match the American system of peer review. This is true of even the most highly regarded and prestigious journals and does not, by itself, suggest that the journal is any less rigorous or selective than its American counterparts. Our distinction between commercial and university publishers (where the latter is generally considered peer reviewed and adhering to higher standards), does not apply to many countries where the notion of a university publisher is unknown (such as all European countries except the UK). In the absence of homogenous procedures it is impossible to rank journals for the purpose of assessing the quality of scholarship published in them. The SAH recommends that judgments of the quality of a candidate's publications should be based on the assessment of expert reviewers who have read the work and can compare it to the state of scholarship in the field to which it contributes.

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