RTP Research Guidelines

Department of Economics, College of Social Sciences

Approved by Secret Ballot of the Department's Tenured and Probationary Faculty (7 yes, 0 no) on April 9, 2021

Below are the RTP Research Guidelines for the Department of Economics ("Department") based on University Policies S15-7 and S15-8. These guidelines apply to regular tenure track/tenured faculty of the Unit 3 Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Most research in economics is based on original research in peer-reviewed journal publications and thus the Department follows the University's policy that "Published or otherwise completed works that are peer-reviewed evaluated by an objective disciplinary expert, or juried will normally receive the greatest weight." (S15-8 2.3.1.4). The Department encourages original research that advances knowledge; research which synthesizes information across disciplines, topics, and time; and research which studies teaching and learning within the discipline (S158 2.3.1.2).

The following guidelines focus on these publication venues and are meant to "assist committees and administrators outside of the Department or college…[understand] the standards appropriate to the candidate's profession" (S15-7 4.1.5). These guidelines should not be construed as global or exclusive, as other types of research, e.g. books, significant media publications, grants, etc., are also valued (S15-7 4.2.2; S15-8 2.3.5). Guidelines are an aid for evaluating a candidate's level of achievement and assist the review committees in understanding the standards appropriate to the candidate's profession to ensure fair and equitable application of these standards (S15-7 4.1.3 and 4.1.5) The tenure relevance of research which falls outside these guidelines should be carefully explained by the candidate on an individual basis and the candidate should "request that disciplinary experts provide evaluations of any of their work to be included in the dossier" (S15-8 2.3.1.3).

Use and Importance of Journal Rankings

The Department significantly values publications in highly selective journals and recognizes such publications as a significant achievement:

- Publishing in a highly-selective journal typically takes several years given the quality of work demanded, the referee review process, and required revisions.
- Highly-selective journals often have low acceptance rates with some lower than 5% in premier journals (approximately in the top 1% of most rankings).

Therefore, while the quantity of publications is a contributing factor to a candidate's scholarly success, the Department places a high value on the quality of a candidate's publications. The Department also recognizes that:

- The impact factor of a journal does not necessarily reflect the quality of the journal.
- Different journal rankings exist which use different criteria.

The Department relies on the following standard rankings of journals[1] which are widely accepted within the economics field. We recommend the candidate refer to one or more of these lists when documenting their achievements:

- The Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List
- Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities
- IDEAS/Research Papers in Economics (RePEc) Aggregate Rankings for Journals

Instructions on accessing rankings are included at the end of this document.

Additional ranking lists may be particularly relevant when candidates have published outside of economics. Candidates may publish in journals outside of the economics field, and such multidisciplinary work is valued by the Department as by the University. In this case, references to rankings specific to that field may be used, and the candidate should explain the importance of the publication to economics and to the field in which they published in their research narrative.

Research Publication Standards

A minimum of two peer-reviewed publications listed in a standard journal ranking is required for retention, tenure, and promotion. Fewer than two peer-reviewed publications will result in a score of 'Unsatisfactory' per University guidelines (S15-8 3.3.2.2). Peer-reviewed journals must be ranked in order to be recognized per these guidelines. Book publications must undergo peer or external review.

The majority of papers in economics are co-authored, with some fields normally having three to four co-authors. The Department values these co-authored papers and highly values sole-authored papers and papers in which the candidate is the senior author. In addition, the Department highly values papers co-authored with students.

Other types of publications and research activities are also highly valued by the University, College, and Department. For example, the Department values grants, book publications, white papers, and other scholarship of engagement (S15-8 2.3.5), especially those which undergo a rigorous review process.

Research Publication Examples

Below are "hypothetical examples of profiles that would warrant given level of achievement which candidates should consider in their scholarly activities" (S15-7 4.2.1), based on the criteria described in S15-8 3.3.2. In addition, "[w]hen a candidate's achievements are significant but depart from the general description below, evaluators should exercise judgment and give credit for unusual, unique, or unanticipated activities at the same level as better known activities of comparable significance" (S15-8 3.3.1.1).

[1] Predatory 'pay to play' journals are not included in these databases; however, publications in these journals are explicitly excluded from recognition in a dossier. Journal submission fees which do not guarantee publication are recognized as distinct from 'pay to play' fees. Cabell's Predatory Journal Blacklist may be used to verify if a journal is 'pay to play'.

The "Top 5" journals in economics are generally understood to be the *American Economic Review* (and related *American Economic Journal* publications), *Econometrica*, *the Journal of Political Economy*, the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, and the *Review of Economic Studies*[2]. The candidate may argue for another equivalent journal to be included in this elite list.

A highly selective journal may be a journal listed as an "A" or equivalent in one of the ranking databases, but the candidate should list and establish the quality of all publications in their research narrative.

Baseline Examples

> *"The candidate has, over the course of the period of review, created a body of completed scholarly/artistic/professional achievements and shows the promise of continued growth and success within his/her discipline"(S15-8 3.3.2.3).*

Baseline 1: Two publications in peer-reviewed journals, accompanied by a consistent record of contributions to the field through research presentations and white papers, as part of a regular research program.

Baseline 2: Two publications in peer-reviewed journals and a series of reports or technical documents aimed at an audience of public and private professionals, accompanied by a consistent record of contributions to the field through research presentations, as part of a regular research program.

Baseline 3: One publication in a peer-reviewed journal and one peer-reviewed book chapter, accompanied by a consistent record of contributions to the field through research presentations and white papers, as part of a regular research program.

Good Examples

> *"In addition to the baseline as described above, the candidate has created scholarly/artistic/professional achievements that constitute important contributions to the discipline and that help to enhance the scholarly/artistic/professional reputation of the candidate's department, school, college, SJSU, or the CSU more generally" (S15-8 3.3.2.4).*

Good 1: One publication in a highly selective peer-reviewed journal, accompanied by publications in other peer-reviewed journals or scholarly publications, such as book chapters or white papers, and research presentations, as part of a regular research program.

Good 2: Three publications in peer-reviewed journals, accompanied by a consistent record of contributions to the field through research presentations, as part of a regular research program.

[2] (Heckman, James J., and Sidharth Moktan. "Publishing and promotion in economics: the tyranny of the top five." Journal of Economic Literature 58, no. 2 (2020): 419-70.

Good 3: One complete book in academic publishing which undergoes peer review, accompanied by a consistent record of contributions to the field through research presentations, as part of a regular research program.

Excellent Examples

> *"In addition to a good performance as described above, this level requires achievements of both sufficient quality and quantity to establish a significant, important, and growing reputation within the candidate's field. Excellence in scholarly/artistic/professional achievement requires a body of work that is recognized as significant within the discipline" (S15-8 3.3.2.5).*

Excellent 1: One publication in a "Top 5" journal, accompanied by at least one other publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Excellent 2: One publication in a highly selective peer-reviewed journal, accompanied by publications in three other peer-reviewed journals as part of a regular research pipeline.

Excellent 3: Two publications in a highly selective peer-reviewed journal, accompanied by a consistent record of contributions to the field through research presentations, as part of a regular research program.

Excellent 4: One complete book in academic publishing which undergoes peer review, accompanied by a publication in one other peer-reviewed journal as part of a regular research program.

Option to Opt-Out

Faculty who were hired before these guidelines were adopted by the Department and approved by the Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs and the Professional Standards Committee of the San José State University Academic Senate may choose to opt out of using these guidelines when submitting their dossier for review.

Accessing Ranking Lists

The Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List

The ranking may be accessed by visiting the website (https://abdc.edu.au/research/abdc-journal-list-2/) and downloading the current journal list as a .csv file in the search box under 'Export Full List'. The list includes the journal title, publisher, field of research (by code), rating (by letter grade), and additional ISSN details.

Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities

The ranking may be accessed through the SJSU Library Databases link under "C". You will be prompted to log in through SJSU and then re-directed to the search page for the database. You can then look up a journal to see if it is listed in the directory using quotations, e.g. "Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization". The database lists the discipline, acceptance rate, review method, time to review, and the AltMetric Report including the Cabell's Classification Index (higher percentages indicate higher influence), difficulty of acceptance, and the Scite Citation Index (higher rank indicates more citations).

IDEAS/Research Papers in Economics (RePEc) Aggregate Rankings for Journals

The ranking may be accessed by visiting the website which lists all the information on the landing page (https://ideas.repec.org/top/top.journals.all.html). Journal information includes the journal name, rank (as a number), and citation counts.