

Collaborative Team Science: Considerations for Promotion and Tenure
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By its nature, successful research becomes increasingly complex and sophisticated over time - over the past decade innovative and significant research discovery has become increasingly dependent on collaborative ventures, and collaborative team scientists have become essential components of the research workforce. Collaborative team scientists are those for whom the research accomplishments, publication and national reputation rest on original, creative, indispensable, and unique contributions made in conjunction with a group/team of scientists. A collaborative/team scientist may play the same or different roles within various teams.

According to University of Kentucky Governing Regulations (GR VII.A.6), all educational units in which faculty appointment is permitted have established statements for use in guiding evaluations for promotion and tenure, describing evidences of activity in instruction, research and service that are appropriate to the field(s) represented in the unit. The purpose of this document is to offer suggestions for statements of evidence that might be considered by educational units for whom team science is a field represented by faculty appointed to the unit.

Traditional indicators of research achievement (Principal Investigator status on grants, first- or senior-author status on peer-reviewed data-based journal articles) remain key indicators of achievement for independent investigators, but these metrics may not serve as effective indicators of excellence among collaborative/team scientists whose skills, expertise and/or effort play a vital role in obtaining, sustaining, and implementing programmatic research.

When research/scholarship is pursued in a collaborative fashion, results often appear in multi-authored publications and grant funding with Co-Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator status. In these instances, it is incumbent on the candidate and the candidate's chair to document the unique role and contribution of the candidate to the joint effort. This can be achieved by annotating the candidate's CV ('Participated extensively in the statistical analysis of this study [grant]' added to citation), developing brief descriptions of repeated achievements (*: studies [grants] using the x analytic procedure I developed), or writing a brief candidate statement explaining joint efforts. Examples of unique contributions could include conception and design of the project; program evaluation; clinical support; analysis and interpretation of data; intellectual contribution to grants and manuscripts; and administrative, technical, supervisory or material support of the project. These efforts may not require or result in independent funding.

In preparing promotion and tenure dossiers for collaborative/team scientists, it is highly recommended that the role of the collaborative role of the candidate be addressed in faculty and internal letters and that outside evaluators include expert collaborative team scientists who can evaluate the impact of the candidate's original, creative, indispensable, and unique contributions to team science.