

**APPENDIX A**  
**HOWARD UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Media, Journalism and Film**  
**Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Criteria**  
**Guidelines for Creative Achievement**

This Statement of Philosophy is designed to be used in conjunction with *Recommendation 306-2005: the School of Communications Minimum Criteria Governing Consideration for Appointment, Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure in the Academic Ranks in the School of Communications*. This document also incorporates definitions from the Howard University Workload Policy adopted by the Board of Trustees.

**Table of Contents**

<b>Preamble .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Scholarship/Creative Activity .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sequences .....</b>	<b>5</b>
• <b>Media and Film .....</b>	<b>5</b>
○ <b>Audio/Radio .....</b>	<b>5</b>
○ <b>Media and Film.....</b>	<b>6</b>
• <b>Journalism .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Distribution .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Guidelines for Creative Achievement .....</b>	<b>9</b>

**PREAMBLE**

The Department of Media, Journalism and Film is unique and dynamic in that it not only produces and achieves excellence in research programs that span the spectrum of acknowledged and accepted scholarly research, but also produces creative and professional activity alone or in combination with traditional research. The university expects professionally oriented faculty to conduct classes that serve as teaching laboratories for imparting professional skills and knowledge to students. These faculty members also are expected to devote their time and energies to advancing the practices of media, journalism and film through their own productions, consultancies, entrepreneurial and commercial ventures, publications and creative endeavors across the spectrum of a rapidly evolving media of mass communications. This includes performances as television producers, audio producers, scriptwriters, filmmakers, on-air talent, website and application developers, storytelling journalists or other professionals. Such activity constitutes dissemination of information through the practice of professional communication.

Although their research may encompass peer-reviewed journal articles, refereed conference presentations, edited book chapters and edited books similar to that of other disciplines across the academy, the creative research that is produced by the department

is unique. The department consists of faculty from diverse fields whose work can pose a challenge for tenure and promotion committees involved with assessing the scholarship of non-traditional works. For example, the “the so-called archival journal ... which functions as a screening system for quality, may be an inadequate measure” [1] not only for filmmaking, radio and audio production, and journalistic projects but also for new media research built on creative endeavors. Applying a single assessment standard to such varied scholarship becomes impractical with the convergence of multiple educational perspectives. In order to sustain an MJF faculty that supports innovation, excellence in teaching and synergistic collaboration, the appointment, promotion and tenure process must offer multiple pathways to tenure that creates procedures that can adequately evaluate the myriad of forms of scholarly work being produced.

This document outlines a model of best practices regarding these issues in order to crystallize new ways of evaluating creative scholarship that takes into consideration legacy and digital filmmaking, transformative changes in radio, television, sound engineering and journalism as well as emerging and new media and other forms of interactive communications technology. If these scholars are going to advance within the academy, the existing tenure and promotion system must be redefined and expanded to include a more modern definition of intellectual excellence. [2]

The debate over modernizing assessment in the academy has been raging for more than 20 years. In fact, several major academic associations have addressed the notion of an evolving scholarship that examines output in a modern way. For example, the University Film and Video Association and the Broadcast Education Association have noted that creative research should be viewed on par with “traditional” research. BEA states “creative endeavors often involve traditional research methods of information gathering, literature reviews, synthesis of information and analysis.”

Similarly, the National Academies found that “the highest benchmark for success in traditional academic departments, publication in peer-reviewed journals, is less relevant to success in new media and empirically less an accurate measure of stature in the field than more supple or timely forms of intellectual exposition.” [3]

And the Modern Language Association (MLA), which has embraced digital humanities research, warned that participation in electronic scholarship should not place extra demands on a researcher. As the MLA puts it, “Evaluative bodies should review faculty members’ work in the medium in which it was produced. For example, Web-based projects should be viewed online, not in printed form.” [4]

Further complicating the evaluation of media achievement is the fact that they are often interdisciplinary and/or collaborative. Faculty members may collaborate with other professors and professionals in interactive technologies, music, computer science or journalism. In addition, creative projects may span numerous genres, from editorials, audioscapes, documentaries and short films to political activism to community organizing to software design. Emerging media or new media, which includes websites, mobile media applications and digital media projects, may be produced for and disseminated via online or mobile platforms or distributed via semantic web technologies. These differences require evaluators to look beyond the usual standards applicable in other disciplines. [5]

We support the assessment guidelines from the School of Communications at Georgia State University (2014):

“As a result of interdisciplinary collaborations, some of a candidate’s publications or creative projects may appear in the scholarly or artistic outlets of other disciplines. We recognize that work in the general academic field of communication can and does regularly make contributions to the knowledge base of a broad range of disciplines, and we will not disadvantage such work appearing in related professional publications, insofar as its quality is appropriately demonstrated. Likewise, a candidate’s creative collaborations with other artists outside and within the discipline of Communication will be given consideration. While interdisciplinary work is highly valued and encouraged, it is still expected that a candidate will be able to make the case that his/her core program of work maintains a strong connection to and is within the discipline of Communication.”

(p. 11) [\[6\]](#)

Therefore the Department of Media, Journalism and Film offers the following guidelines to ensure that faculty understand that they can adequately contribute to the work of the department, spirit of creativity and innovation, and to this new world of scholarship, without damaging their chances of success within the academic system. These guidelines incorporate the Ernest Boyer model, which expanded the concept of scholarship from the traditional view and incorporates the scientific discovery of new knowledge, to include the scholarship of integration, application and teaching. [\[7\]](#) The expansion is intended to aid faculty by representing our best understanding of standards important both for the School of Communications and for Howard University.

### **Scholarship/Creative Activity**

Creative and/or professional activities must advance or extend knowledge frontiers, be grounded in sound practices within the discipline or demonstrate innovative ideas or techniques that contribute to greater public/target audience knowledge, understanding and use of information. Professionally oriented work in roles such as reporter, photojournalist, editor, broadcast journalist, producer, director or scriptwriter must demonstrate in-depth research, analysis, innovation and/or impact, regardless of length or medium. Evidence of contribution to the field must be documented by peer

review and/or by significant recognition, acceptance and success as defined by professional or academic constituents. Examples of impact can include the aforementioned evidence; the reach to global, national and local markets; and/or contribution to solving real-world problems, addressing critical issues or serving under-represented groups. Other examples of impact may include aggregate information that uses Google Analytics or an equivalent to demonstrate extensive reach.

Creative productions should be explained and include broadcast scripts, audio productions, news packages, scriptwriting, interactive design, documentaries, commentary and news articles. The productions should be evaluated based on whether they have been aired or published by a legitimate commercial, public and cable radio, and television organizations, or an online entity, such as iTunes or Netflix.

Additional measures of excellence can be drawn from the following [\[8\]](#)

**Significance** — The degree to which the work has enhanced, or is likely to enhance, knowledge, thinking, understanding and/or practice in its field.

**Originality** — The degree to which the work has developed new formulations or data and/or initiated new methods and/or forms of expression.

**Rigor** — The degree of intellectual precision and/or systematic method and/or integrity embodied in the research.

**Strategy** — The degree to which the research environment has been designed and developed to contribute to research activity and sustainability.

**Recognition** — The degree to which, individually and collectively, the work of researchers has been recognized externally.

**Influence** — The degree of influence and/or contribution made to research practices and their debates in the wider context.

**Benefit** — The degree to which researchers and the research environment have benefited through the department's reputation for research.

As production roles, technology, technique and craft are constantly evolving, emerging and changing, the MJF faculty reserves the right to amend responsibilities and functions on a case-by-case basis as applicable to a specific multimedia environment to maintain compliance with industry standards.

The MJF faculty recognizes that all productions are not equal. Thus, in order to maintain high academic standards, the level of creative and technical quality along with social impact will be assessed and determined by the department's APT Committee.

A candidate seeking appointment, promotion or tenure must demonstrate the creative and technical quality, along with social impact of his/her production by providing the following documentation as appropriate with the application:

1. Peer reviews by scholars and/or industry professionals
2. Award nominations
3. Awards
4. Research
5. Recognition for technical innovation
6. Festival acceptance
7. Contests recognition
8. Evidence of social impact (articles, critical reviews, media coverage)
9. Letters of support from peers in the industry

## **Sequences in the Department of Media, Journalism and Film**

The Department of Media, Journalism and Film unifies several intellectual and creative strands within the school that share the common concerns of communicating in effective ways at local, regional, national and global levels. Although the department acts as one administrative unit, it is made up of two sequences, including one with two areas of concentration: Media and Film. Because of the collaborative nature of media, creative works are not limited to an individual creator of a particular production or project. A significant contribution in a production or project is considered appropriate evidence of artistry and creative activity, whether that project is a major group effort, such as a broadcast television program or film documentary, or an individual endeavor such as an experimental audio or video.

### **The two sequences and the related concentrations are as follows:**

#### **1. MEDIA and FILM**

##### **a. Audio/Radio:**

The audio/radio sequence focuses on the art and the science of audio and music technology. Creative projects in the audio/radio sequence may include (but are not limited to) scriptwriting, directing, producing, sound design, multitrack sound editing and performance. Due to the rapidly expanding nature of the field, these roles may occur in film/motion picture production, broadcast television, video, radio and interactive works.

Audio works and professional activities involving sound and audio production permeate the other disciplines within MJF and also exist as artifacts from many audio-specific or audio-only fields and contexts. With this in mind, it is important to note that although a radio or audio-only program or production is “only audio,” the effort required to produce this artifact often involves the same amount of planning, production, editorial, and other post-production work as a film, TV program, etc. Therefore, the perceived (or actual) lack of other media within these works should not be considered a deficit in rigor, effort or substance. Additionally, in audio, short themes and interstitial music that is played on a nationally broadcast program may have a greater impact than a 50-minute symphony that took many months to compose and may be played a few times a decade.

Whenever possible, audio works that are evaluated for the purpose of awarding promotion or tenure should be experienced within the context for which they are created. For example, radio productions can usually stand alone as audio-only artifacts. Conversely, while it is possible to experience sound design projects or musical compositions for film as audio-only artifacts, experiencing these works within the context for which they were created (i.e. listened to while the evaluator watches the film) is much more desirable. Although it is not always possible, the candidate should try to include entire films (or substantial clips) in their e-

portfolios, or otherwise assist the evaluating committee in auditioning audio works within their original, intended medium (or multimedia) contexts.

### **b. Film/Video**

Producing industry quality films and television programming does not fall along the same continuum as does other research. To wit: The industry is a collaborative endeavor. One need only look at the credits that run at the end of a movie to see how many principals are involved. Thus, to judge creative work as one might an article — i.e. sole author, co-authored, etc. — would be inappropriate. Instead, it is both appropriate, and in many cases expected, that a faculty member is not solely responsible for a creative production. In those cases when a faculty member fulfills multiple roles during a creative production, it should be factored in appropriately. [9]

The university has in place a definition of creative research/productions that focuses on the length of a production. This is inappropriate. Within this framework, a production that does not fall within a specific timeframe is deemed unworthy of measure in the APT process. Think about this hypothetical example. A MJF faculty member is hired to produce a 30-second commercial to air during the Super Bowl. That would be a multi-million dollar endeavor broadcast worldwide to more than one billion people.

Yet under the current model that the university employs, that faculty member would not receive credit as creative research for that production. Thus, while length of production is *one* measure to take into account when measuring a faculty member's research, we share the sentiments of our colleagues at many peer institutions: A piece of work need not be lengthy to be taken seriously; in this field, a substantial body of pithy and well-written short pieces is sometimes a more valuable contribution than the book-length enterprise, because of the immediacy of the shorter works' availability and the impact of timeliness on public debate. Although it is recognized that a university setting does afford a faculty member sufficient time to undertake longer works of major significance — something we actively encourage — we recognize that a substantial set of informed editorials, a series of reported feature articles, a broadcast series, or a collection of short reported pieces about a single subject area deserves serious weight and attention comparable to that of a longer article or a reported book that might appear months or years later. [10]

Producing a film, television, radio or audio program is a costly and time-consuming endeavor. Whereas a productive researcher may be able to produce one article per year, a productive independent practitioner of audio, film or television may only produce one final product every three to five years. Film productions also require faculty to raise funds necessary to complete the project as well as develop a clear plan for distribution, exhibition and discussion with relevant audiences. In short, we engage the key social issues affecting individuals and communities, research and analyze, write creatively, fundraise, manage resources, make technical-aesthetic applications, and finally we plan, reach and engage audiences.

## **2. JOURNALISM**

Professionally oriented journalistic work in roles such as writer, reporter, photojournalist, editor, designer or producer must demonstrate in-depth journalism, analysis, innovation and/or impact deeper than description or routine reporting, regardless of length or medium. Evidence of contribution to the field must be documented by peer review and/or by significant recognition, acceptance and success as defined by professional or academic constituents. Examples of impact can include the aforementioned evidence; the reach to global, national and local audiences; and/or contribution to solving real-world problems, addressing critical issues or serving under-represented groups.

Creative productions include broadcast scripts, news packages, documentaries, articles, publications, digital projects and commentary. They should be explained and should be evaluated based on whether they have been aired, published or otherwise disseminated by a legitimate radio, or television broadcast organization, online or print news entity, including but not limited to commercial, public and cable radio and television.

While length may be a consideration, it should not be the overriding consideration in evaluating a piece of work. What is more important is the quality of the work and its impact on public debate and to what degree it speaks for the voiceless in underserved communities. A series of short pieces that are timely can make as valuable a contribution as a book, which can take months or years before it reaches the public.

All work should reflect original and substantial reporting, research, scholarship/analysis, commentary or learned observation. If broadcast, it should reflect the highest production values and skills.

It should appear in a respected venue that includes, but is not limited to, national or local newspapers, magazines and online publications or broadcast outlets. Such activities may be developed for presentation in print, visual, electronic and/or interactive media. The nature of such work will vary widely depending on the faculty member's field of practice. In the case of electronic reporting and producing, additional technical skills such as recording, filming and editing are also desirable. "The work can also come in the form of databases, blogs, websites and other interactive forms that do not resemble traditional journal articles or monographs. In addition, digitally published work is not always peer-reviewed prior to publication and dissemination." [11]

### **DISTRIBUTION**

A record of distribution of artistic work may match the publication of books and journals in a number of ways. The successful procurement of distribution for a project in MJF may suggest a work exhibits artistic content that meets with professional standards and whose content may have larger implications for the society at large. Nevertheless, a distribution of a given artistic product can take place in many forms:

1. Selection by established distribution system
2. Selection by alternative distribution system
3. Television/Cable/Satellite etc.
4. Public Broadcasting type stations

5. Internet and mobile distribution
6. Self distribution using alternative/innovative approaches

Audio, visual and other multimedia works may be publicly presented and disseminated in whatever manner and to whatever audience is most appropriate for the work. This may include distribution by an Internet platform such as iTunes and Netflix, with evidence of significant reach; or through mediated or curated national and international websites, such as Huffington Post, newspapers such as The Washington Post or authoritative blogs. Joint authorship or creation will be credited in proportion to the candidate's contribution.

Reviewers must take into consideration that politics may also play a major role in a creative work gaining distribution. Class, race, gender or ideological bias may limit a creative work's ability to find distribution in all areas listed above with the exception of self-distribution. Given our critical tradition at Howard University and its historic mission, we must acknowledge that racially based impediments may prevent a quality creative work from gaining distribution and exhibition. Whether the individual is capable of fashioning an independent or alternative distribution method or not, our criteria should take these factors into consideration when evaluating an artist.

Opportunities for exhibition comparable to publication may also be secured in the following manner:

1. Theatrical and non theatrical exhibition
2. Art house exhibition outlets
3. Museums and cultural centers
4. Universities and colleges
5. Festivals (traditional and alternative)

When a given a creative product is finally exhibited, it provides the university and academic community with credible criteria to evaluate artistic expression. A faculty member may also present a press review of the creative work from its exhibition to further reinforce its credibility and justification for promotion or tenure. Above all, tenure and tenure track faculty members should be encouraged to give coherent documentation of the distribution experience.

Audio, visual and other multimedia works may be publicly presented and disseminated in whatever manner and to whatever audience is most appropriate for the work. The differences between traditional and new media excellence lie in both form and content. The hard-copy format of traditional review documentation, such as photocopies or slides, is insufficient for evaluating new media work. Screenshots do little justice to electronic projects based on innovative, interactive or participatory design. The weight accorded these materials will be measured by their contribution to the intellectual and/or professional community, their adherence to professional standards, the quality of execution and the distinction they may bring to the school and university, including their ability to significantly impact local, national or international audiences and win national



awards or be accepted by juries for major exhibits. The reputation and quality of the venues in which the faculty member's work appears are considered in evaluation.

**Guidelines for Creative Achievement in Department of Media, Journalism and Film**  
(All work presented by candidates must be peer-reviewed.)

**A. Exemplary Creative/Professional Activities**

1. Acquisition of a major regional, national or international grant.
2. Compilation and nationwide distribution of computer software, wikis and other relevant formats for educational, professional development, research and documentary purposes in the field of communication.
3. Writing, editing and/or production of a scholarly, professional or popular book, monograph or other material if the project demonstrates high standards in the practice of the discipline and/or is published by a major publisher or academic press.
4. Photojournalism and other creative projects that are juried or competitively recognized on a national or international level
5. Editing of a publication that is nationally or internationally recognized with a frequency of at least six times a year for a minimum of nine consecutive months.
6. Editing/producing a website that is nationally or internationally recognized and that is updated at least weekly for a minimum of nine consecutive months.
7. Reflecting the time-driven nature of new media and other creative projects, a narrative, photojournalism or other multimedia project conducted for an unspecified period, but at a level of excellence that exceeds professional norms, that enhances professional discipline and that is nationally or internationally recognized.
8. Development or application of technology for communication enterprises or for the educational community, including new and existing websites; regularly maintained and nationally recognized web logs (blogs) and video logs (vlogs)
9. Strategic media and/or business plans, including substantive strategies for Search Engine Optimization (SEO), media reorganization or repositioning, business development and/or relaunches that are nationally or internationally recognized, or that achieved industry-standard measures for best practices. Promotion and tenure candidates may be called upon to explain and give context to these metrics for their reviewers. Again, efforts to educate a scholar's colleagues about new media should be considered part of that scholar's research, not supplemental to it. Examples of creative and/or research accomplishments may also include:
  - (a) Downloads and other web traffic-related statistics;
  - (b) Search returns on the author's name or statistically improbable phrases that reflect a measure of real-world impact in local or global communities;

(c) Net-native recognition metrics through peer-evaluated online communities, and/or impact in online discussions.

(d) Measures such as the number of list subscribers, geographic scope, the presence or absence of moderation, and the number of replies triggered by a given contribution can give a sense of the importance of each discussion list.

10. Authorship of works such as articles, reviews, commentaries, multimedia, and/or other creative projects published or broadcast locally, nationally or internationally in newspapers, magazines, popular or industry-specific media (e.g., TV and film documentaries, JAE, Folio, AJR, CJR, BEA, UFVA, etc.) or on the Internet if they demonstrate high standards in the practice of the discipline. This can include:

- A substantial set of informed editorials
- A series of reported articles
- A broadcast, cablecast or webcast series
- A singular in-depth or long-form article, special report or other project
- A collection of short reported pieces about a single subject or a substantive collection on diverse subjects
- A documentary film, conceived, produced and directed solely by the candidate at the highest standards of the field.
- Full article peer-reviewed conference proceedings

11. Providing significant leadership in developing and conducting local, regional, national or international seminars, workshops, webcasts, short courses, conferences and conventions for academics or professionals.

12. Live, filmed or taped productions that have been exhibited or broadcast on television, radio, satellite or cable at the local, regional, national or international level and/or on any Arbitron-rated station, online and/or other distribution deemed of significance. It also includes theatrical and non-theatrical exhibition, art house exhibition outlets, museums and cultural centers, universities and colleges, festivals (traditional and alternative), sound installation or experimental interactive film, video games, computer program, or smartphone app. Short themes and interstitial music that is played on a nationally broadcast program demonstrate impact. A major production for audio, video (including instructional project, etc.), film or other multimedia must be completed and must adhere to the following guidelines:

- At least one minute in which a faculty member fulfills at least one of the following roles: scriptwriter, writer, producer, director, editor or designer.
- An interactive narrative or comparable digital project that is comprehensive and includes three or more multimedia elements (i.e., text, audio, video, photojournalism, maps, graphics, data visualization, timelines).
- All completed productions must be aired or exhibited before a refereed body of peers recognized by the profession, and/or documented by

significant recognition, acceptance and success as defined by academic or professional constituents.

- All completed productions, whether narrative or documentary, must reflect research and artistic or journalistic vision.

### **B. High Creative/Professional Activities**

1. Administration of a grant or additional efforts to sustain grant.
2. Photojournalism and other creative projects that are juried or competitively recognized on a regional level. These are not limited to, but can include:
  - Photographs,
  - Digital photo galleries
  - Soundslides, incorporating audio and photographs
  - Videotapes, DVDs or online videos,
  - Audiotapes, CDs, online audio or podcasts,
  - CD-ROMS or kiosks
3. Photojournalism and other creative projects (see above) that are not juried, but are recognized as excellent and important contributions to the candidate's field.
4. Multi-track musical productions and other creative projects that are juried or competitively recognized on a regional level. These are not limited to, but can include:
  - Videotapes, DVDs or online videos,
  - Audiotapes, CDs, online audio or podcasts,
  - CD-ROMS or kiosks.
5. Authorship of works such as articles, reviews, commentaries, multimedia and other creative projects published locally, nationally or internationally in newspapers, magazines, popular media or on the Internet if they demonstrate high standards in the practice of the discipline.
6. Editorship of publications or other materials that are locally/regionally recognized or that are nationally/internationally recognized but published quarterly or less frequency, or for less than nine months.
7. Editorship or production of digital publications or other materials that are locally, nationally or internationally recognized for less than nine months or updated less than weekly.
8. Articles, reviews, analyses, commentaries, multimedia, and/or other creative projects published or broadcast in newspapers, magazines, the Internet or other popular, trade or academic media if they demonstrate high standards in the practice of the discipline.
9. Meritorious work of a demanding nature in professional positions during summers or leave time, provided a detailed report and critique of the activity is prepared by the candidate.
10. Development and management of meritorious special projects of an academic or professional nature that exceed normal expectations of teaching and/or instruction and supervision of co-curricular programs, and that achieve recognition on local, regional, national or international level

and/or other targeted area deemed of significance. The candidate must also prepare a detailed report and critique of the activity.

11. Receipt of major national or international awards.
12. Receipt of professional development fellowships or certification (Poynter, NNA, API, NABJ, PRSA, AHCJ, SPJ, BEA, Nieman, Knight, etc.).

### **C. Satisfactory Creative/Professional Activities**

1. Writing or contributing to grants for faculty, students or co-curricular programs
2. Presentations at international, national and regional gatherings of recognized professional, academic, trade and other associations
3. Additional efforts to sustain funding when grant runs out
4. Receipt of significant institutional, local or regional awards
5. Citation of creative or research accomplishments
6. Editorial board member of a scholarly or professional publication of local, regional, national or international reputation
7. Development of a unique journalistic, artistic, digital and/or professional specialization for which the faculty member is nationally recognized as the primary resource person
8. Development and management of meritorious materials for professional journalists and other professional communicators.
9. Attending academic and professional workshops, seminars, meetings and conferences that contribute to professional/creative activity.

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