Traditionally, academic institutions have relied on archival publications (i.e., peer-reviewed journal papers) to help assess the scholarship of their faculty. Because of the wide variations in the review processes of conference presentations and proceedings, the significance of conference papers typically has been heavily discounted.

The traditional viewpoint is being challenged by the rate of innovation — which necessitates publication venues with much faster turnaround times — as well as by the quick availability of information on the web, and by the highly respected review processes now employed by some technical conferences. Indeed, in some technical areas, traditional journal publications are being supplanted by reviewed conference proceedings that achieve high quality with only short publication delays. For these reasons, it is time to recognize that the scholarship and stature of some conference papers can approach, equal, or exceed that of many journal papers.

The quality of conference venues can vary widely between the fields of specialization, including between different research areas within the same department. Thus, junior faculty members are advised to carefully weigh the value of publishing in conference venues, and to consult their department chairs and the senior faculty in their specific disciplines regarding the scholarly impact and merit of publications in specific conference proceedings.

In reappointment, promotion, and tenure cases, the primary unit report is expected to comment on the quality of reviewed proceedings papers published by the candidate, and on the quality and appropriateness of the reviewed conference proceedings venues selected by the candidate. In particular, the report should identity which proceedings papers (if any) are considered equivalent to top journal papers in the field. Evidence used to establish the high quality of a reviewed conference proceedings, or of a specific paper published in conference proceedings, may include (but is not limited to) multiple measures from the following list:

- The selectivity of the conference (e.g., is the acceptance rate below 50%?)
- The degree of peer review (e.g., are multiple reviewers used, and what is reviewed—full paper vs. abstract?)
- Length of papers appearing in conference proceedings (e.g., full length vs. abstract or extended abstract?)
- Comments from external reviewers or other external sources that attest to the high quality and reputation of a conference proceedings venue, possibly including selectivity, peer review, and/or length of published papers
- Comments from external reviewers that establish the significance and high scholarship of specific papers, regardless of venue
- Data collected from previous reappointment, promotion, and tenures cases that attest to the high quality and reputation of specific conference proceedings and have set a precedent
- Information on the availability and impact of a proceedings paper published by the candidate (e.g., is it easily accessible to individuals not attending the conference, and how often has the paper been cited?)