

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Priti R. Shah, assistant professor of psychology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of psychology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

| | | |
|------|-------|---|
| 1996 | Ph.D. | Carnegie Mellon University |
| 1992 | M.S. | Carnegie Mellon University |
| 1990 | A.B. | University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill |

Professional Record:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| 1999 – present | Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan |
| 1997 – 1999 | Assistant Professor, University of Memphis |
| 1995 – 1997 | Postdoctoral Fellow, University of California, Santa Barbara |

Summary of Evaluations:

Teaching – Professor Shah teaches an advanced lecture course serving mostly natural science majors, and a smaller first-year seminar on adjustment to college. She has demonstrated skill at maintaining an interactive teaching style even in courses with relatively large enrollments. Each term she works closely with over ten undergraduates in her research lab, giving them the opportunity to experience research first hand. She has done an excellent job of teaching graduate students in the Combined Program in Education and Psychology (CPEP), in Developmental Psychology, and in Cognition and Perception. Her high ratings show that she is able to serve the Department's curriculum with exceptional instruction.

Research – Professor Shah has made a number of influential contributions to basic cognitive psychology and applied cognitive science. She has three specific research themes: working memory, executive cognitive functions, and comprehension of visual and graphical information displays. In addition to numerous articles in top-tier refereed journals, she has published lengthy chapters in top-tier books and co-edited three of the books. One of these, *Models of Working Memory: Mechanisms of Active Maintenance and Executive Control*, has been called a classic in the field.

Recent and Significant Publications:

The Cambridge Handbook of Visuospatial Thinking, co-edited with A. Miyake, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

“Exploring visuospatial thinking in chemistry,” with H. Wu, *Science Education*, 88, 2004, pp. 465-492.

“Memory for graphics, diagrams, and videos,” in *Encyclopedia of Education, Volume 5*, J. Guthrie (ed.), Macmillan, 2003, pp. 1594-1596.

“Models of working memory: An introduction,” with A. Miyake, in *Models of Working Memory: Mechanisms of Active Maintenance and Executive Control*, co-edited with A. Miyake, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 1-26.

Service – Professor Shah has served on a number of Area, Department, and College committees, including the Department of Psychology’s Augmented Executive Committee, three School of Education faculty search committees, and the University’s Junior Women Faculty Network Advisory Committee. She has recently become involved in the University’s Learning Sciences Initiative, which involves scholars interested in the scientific study of learning. Nationally, Professor Shah has been engaged in a variety of service activities including ad hoc reviewing for 24 journals.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“Dr. Shah has done a lot of incisive empirical work, addressing important theoretical questions with methodological sophistication, and her research programs are moving forward in a manner that promises continuing significant contributions. We would certainly grant her tenure...”

Reviewer (B)

“Priti’s research in the comprehension of graphs... .. is important not just because it supports her theoretical insights, but also because helping people to understand graphic information is itself valuable. Priti is a central contributor to this area...”

Reviewer (C)

“Professor Shah has become one of the leading researchers in understanding the reasoning processes involved in complex thinking, particularly as they are applied to real-world learning contexts such as interpreting graphs. This is a notoriously difficult field to conduct research in, yet Professor Shah has consistently demonstrated both high originality and technical skill in taking questions that were vague and turning them into well controlled and novel research programs.”

Reviewer (D)

“...the Shah and Miyake paper in JPE:G... ..is a very influential paper and clearly has had impact in the field in general and on my work specifically.”

Reviewer (E)

“Priti has a record of excellent work on issues of central importance in cognitive psychology and it is hard to think of anyone whose work has had such a large impact at this career stage.”

Reviewer (F)

“I recommend that Dr. Shah be awarded tenure. My recommendation is based upon the originality and substance of her contributions to (a) research about working memory and executive function, (b) research about comprehension of visual displays, and (c) inter-disciplinary boundary crossing.”

Reviewer (G)

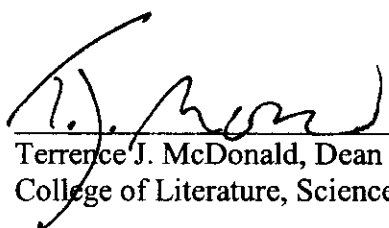
“...[Dr. Shah] works on the cusp of theoretical and applied cognitive psychology. I think being at this interactional frontier is a cutting-edge endeavor. Without sacrificing methodological rigor or theoretical elegance, Dr. Shah has been able to contribute to a body of knowledge with action implications for education and anyone who displays data.”

Reviewer (H)

“Dr. Shah is working on an important and under-studied problem in cognitive psychology, namely, understanding how people understand and reason using graphs. . . . I believe that Dr. Shah is one of the central figures in this small but growing field. The two edited volumes she has produced. . . have established her as the ‘hub’ in this network. . . .”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Shah is fast becoming a prominent figure in her research area. She is a dedicated instructor and a wonderful departmental citizen. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Priti R. Shah be promoted to the rank of associate professor of psychology, with tenure.



Terrence J. McDonald, Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

May 2006