

Publication-Equivalent Scholarly Products (PESPs)

Comprehensive Guide

A PESP is a scholarly product — other than a traditional journal article — that counts toward your promotion at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. If you have created something that advances education, service, or public engagement and that product has been shared, reviewed by peers, and can be used by others, it may qualify as a PESP and carry the same weight as a peer-reviewed publication in your promotion dossier.

How PESPs Factor Into Promotion

PESPs are documented in your promotion dossier and reviewed by the SOM Promotions Committee. In the **Clinician-Educator** and **Clinician-Leader** pathways, PESPs are explicitly interchangeable with traditional peer-reviewed publications when counting scholarly contributions. In the **Investigator-Educator** and **Clinician-Investigator** pathways, PESPs can supplement (but not replace) the core publication record. Each PESP counts as one publication-equivalent unless otherwise noted (the Digital and Social Media section specifies conversion ratios, e.g., 10 videos = 1 PESP). In the Education and Service sections, each distinct scholarly product typically counts as one PESP; an Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA) reviewer confirms final counts. The examples in this guide are illustrative, not exhaustive — other scholarly products not listed here may also qualify.

What Makes a PESP: Three Qualifying Criteria

To qualify, a PESP must meet all three of the following criteria:

- **Disseminated.** The product must be shared beyond the originating institution in a form others can access. This could mean publication on a platform like MedEd Portal, presentation at a national conference, posting on a publicly accessible website, or formal adoption by another program or institution.
- **Peer-reviewed.** The product must have undergone critical evaluation by qualified individuals outside the development team. For non-traditional products (e.g., a clinic operational blueprint or a QI framework), this could include review by an external advisory committee, a professional society panel, or content experts at adopting institutions — not only formal journal-style peer review.
- **Able to be applied and built upon by others.** The product must be documented in sufficient detail so that someone at another institution could implement, adapt, or extend it. A curriculum needs a syllabus and materials; a QI program needs a methodology and outcomes data; a clinical program needs an operational blueprint.

Note: Traditional academic activities (teaching, clinical service, committee work) should still be listed on the CV. Faculty should also disclose any relevant financial relationships, including sponsored posts or content.

I. Scholarship of Education

Scholarship of Education involves a sustained commitment to teaching that results in a disseminated, peer-reviewed product others can build upon. Teaching a clinical topic is the activity of education; developing and disseminating a replicable blueprint of that educational activity is the Scholarship of Education — a Publication-Equivalent Scholarly Product (PESP).

PESP Categories in Education

The following categories describe the types of educational activities that may produce PESPs. Each must be peer-reviewed and adopted or applicable beyond the originating institution.

PESP Category	Description	Examples
Curriculum Development	Creation of innovative curricula that are peer-reviewed and adopted by others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Novel LGBTQ+ health clerkship curriculum adopted across multiple medical schools Competency-based procedural training sequence for internal medicine residents that becomes a national model
Assessment Tools	Development of validated assessment instruments (OSCEs [Objective Structured Clinical Examinations], simulation scenarios)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10-station OSCE for evaluating clinical communication skills in second-year students Validated checklist for assessing laparoscopic surgical technique in residency Simulation scenario for managing septic shock used across residency programs nationally
Educational Technology	Virtual education tools, apps, or digital learning platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptive pharmacology learning platform that adjusts question difficulty based on student performance Virtual patient simulation for practicing motivational interviewing AR/VR anatomy module adopted by peer institutions
Educational Resources	Textbooks, laboratory manuals, or educational media with peer review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer-reviewed procedural skills laboratory manual for nurse practitioner students Edited textbook on clinical reasoning used in graduate medical education programs Annotated multimedia case library for teaching diagnostic reasoning
Collaborative Educational Innovations	Team-based learning curricula, interdisciplinary training programs, or innovative assessment tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interprofessional team-based learning (TBL) module on care transitions co-developed by medicine, nursing, and pharmacy faculty Joint simulation program between surgical and anesthesia residencies for managing intraoperative crises
Evidence-Based Educational Programs	Community-engaged education, simulation programs, or competency-based training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community health worker training curriculum co-designed with underserved communities Simulation-based mastery learning program for central line placement that reduced CLABSI (central line-associated bloodstream infection) rates Competency-based milestone assessment program for family medicine residents validated across a residency consortium

What Are NOT Scholarship of Education PESPs

Teaching for a substantial number of years does NOT qualify as a PESP. Years of classroom, clinical, or bedside instruction — however excellent — represent the activity of education, not the scholarship of education. Receiving strong teaching evaluations, accumulating teaching hours, or holding a course directorship alone are not PESPs without a resulting scholarly product.

✗ **NOT a PESP:** Directing the Internal Medicine clerkship for 10 years with consistently excellent evaluations.

✓ **IS a PESP:** Developing a published, peer-reviewed clerkship curriculum framework from that directorship that is adopted by three other medical schools.

Note: All PESPs must demonstrate creation, validation, peer review, or adoption by others to qualify as scholarly products.

II. Scholarship of Service

Scholarship of Service involves sustained depth of commitment resulting in a disseminated, peer-reviewed product that can be applied and built upon by others. Simply volunteering time does not qualify — the scholarly product is the documented, replicable output of that service activity.

PESP Category	Description	Examples
Internal Service — Service to your Department, SOM, University, Hospital		
Free Clinic Establishment	Creation of a regular specialty clinic at an underserved care site that produces a documented, transferable operational model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and establishment of a regular plastic surgery wound care clinic held weekly at the Birmingham Free Clinic • Clinic staffed regularly with medical students, residents, and faculty • Written blueprint of clinic structure disseminated and replicable by other institutions
Quality Improvement Programs	Design and implementation of evidence-based QI initiatives that produce measurable, replicable outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized hand-off protocol that reduced adverse events, adopted by peer institutions • Written framework documenting methodology, outcomes data, and implementation guide
Clinical Program Development	Creation or restructuring of clinical programs that produce a documented, transferable model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New multidisciplinary liver tumor board with published operational blueprint • Telehealth program model for rural specialty access disseminated at national meetings
External Service — Service to Professional Society / Association or Community		
Board / Certification Exam Innovation	Leadership in redesigning or digitizing national board certification processes that produce a replicable, adopted product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion of an entirely paper-based Oral Exam to an online, digital format • De novo creation of an e-version of the Oral Examination • Product adopted by the national certifying body and applicable to all diplomates
Practice Guideline Development	Leadership in creating or revising clinical practice guidelines for professional societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society-endorsed clinical practice guideline published and adopted nationally • Consensus statement with documented development process and peer review
Community Health Initiatives	Design and leadership of community-based health programs producing a documented, replicable model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community screening program with published implementation toolkit • Health literacy initiative with outcomes data and dissemination at regional/national level
<p>What Are NOT Scholarship of Service PESPs</p> <p>Volunteering time in a free-care clinical setting, serving on committees, or fulfilling administrative duties — however sustained — do NOT qualify as PESPs. These are service activities and should be listed on the CV as such. The distinction lies in the product: a PESP must be a documented, replicable output that has been disseminated and can be adopted by others.</p> <p>✗ NOT a PESP: Chairing the hospital quality committee for six years.</p> <p>✓ IS a PESP: Creating a published operational framework from that committee's work — with methodology, outcomes data, and implementation guide — that other institutions adopt.</p>		

Note: Traditional service activities should still be listed on the CV. This summary documents the scholarly product resulting from those activities.

III. Scholarship of Digital and Social Media

Social and digital media activities can qualify as publication-equivalent scholarly products (PESPs). Content must be relevant to the faculty member's area of scholarly focus — for example, patient education, advocacy, epidemiology, research, or healthcare professions education — and must be publicly archived. All content must adhere to the UPMC Social Media Posting Policy. The committee reserves the right to review submissions for substance, relevance, and impact.

PESP Category	Description	Examples
Reputation, Influence & Leadership		
Professional Social Media Presence	Sustained professional social media profile linked to UPSOM (1 PESP: Healthcare Social Graph Score >70 AND >5,000 professional followers). The Healthcare Social Graph Score is a third-party metric from Symplur that measures a healthcare professional's influence, engagement, and reach on social media, scored on a 0–100 scale.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty maintains @doctorsmithMD on Twitter/X with 6,200 followers and Healthcare Social Graph Score of 74 Profile must present as faculty and be linked to UPSOM Verify score at symplur.com/healthcare-social-graph-score
Video & Audio Content		
Videos, Vlogs, Recorded Lectures & Podcasts	Educational video/audio content on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram Live, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, etc. (10 videos = 1 PESP; 5 podcasts = 1 PESP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Understanding Sepsis: What Patients Need to Know" — 8-min explainer on YouTube with 32,000 views Content must be publicly archived; video/audio must be ≥2 min long OR have >25,000 views Faculty role: content creator, manager, administrator, or featured expert Must address patient education, advocacy, epidemiology, research, or healthcare professional education
Blogs & Invited Commentary		
Blog Posts, Invited Commentary & Non-Peer-Reviewed Articles	Written content on Medscape, Doximity, institutional blogs, or similar platforms (3 pieces = 1 PESP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Five Things Residents Should Know About Burnout" — 1,200-word post on Doximity with 1,800 views Post must be >1,000 words OR have >1,500 views/shares/engagement Must be publicly accessible and archived Faculty role: author, invited commentator, or featured expert
Tweetorials & Online Journal Clubs		
Tweetorials, Twitter/X Journal Clubs & Thread-Based Educational Content	Educational thread or journal club content with high engagement (1 qualifying piece = 1 PESP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tweetorial on interpreting troponin in the ED — 62,000 impressions on Twitter/X >50,000 impressions or engagement on Twitter/X, OR >500 plays/views/shares on a video platform Faculty must be the creator or lead contributor
Media Appearances & Expert Quotes		
Interviews, Expert Quotes & Media Appearances	Faculty quoted or interviewed as expert in TV, radio, print, or digital news outlets using University credentials (5 appearances = 1 PESP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty quoted as expert on antibiotic resistance in NPR Morning Edition segment Faculty must be identified using University credentials Includes TV, radio, print, and digital news outlets Highly impactful appearances may be considered individually by the committee

What Are NOT Scholarship of Digital and Social Media PESPs

Maintaining a personal social media account, posting casually about professional topics, or having a large following alone do NOT qualify as PESPs. Similarly, a single media quote or a brief appearance does not individually constitute a PESP. Content must meet the specified engagement or volume thresholds, address topics relevant to the faculty member's area of scholarly focus, and be publicly archived. All content must adhere to the UPMC Social Media Posting Policy.

✗ **NOT a PESP:** Having 8,000 Twitter/X followers and regularly posting about clinical topics.

✓ **IS a PESP:** Maintaining a Healthcare Social Graph Score above 70 with >5,000 professional followers, profile linked to UPSOM, with content focused on patient education or healthcare professional training.

Note: Traditional academic activities should still be listed on the CV. Disclose any financial relationships including sponsored posts or content.

IV. What to Do Next

If you believe your work includes products that qualify as PESP, the following steps will help you document and submit them as part of your promotion dossier.

- **Identify your PESP.** Review the categories in this guide and determine which of your scholarly products meet all three qualifying criteria (disseminated, peer-reviewed, able to be applied and built upon by others). Keep in mind that the categories listed here are illustrative — other products may also qualify.
- **Gather supporting documentation.** For each PESP, compile evidence that demonstrates all three criteria: where and how the product was disseminated, who reviewed it and what feedback was incorporated, and how others have accessed or adopted it. This might include links to published materials, letters from adopting institutions, conference proceedings, engagement metrics, or external review documentation.
- **Discuss with your mentor or department leadership.** Work with your academic mentor, division chief, or department vice chair for faculty advancement to review your PESP and determine how they fit within your promotion pathway. They can advise on how to present these products most effectively in your dossier.
- **Include PESP in your promotion dossier.** PESP are documented in your promotion materials alongside traditional publications. An Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA) reviewer will review your submission for accuracy and confirm the final PESP count.

For questions about PESP or the promotion process, contact the **Office of Faculty Affairs** or your **Department Vice Chair for Faculty Advancement**.