

Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure Reviews
Uptown Campus
Tenure Track Faculty
September 2013

Background: The Provost reviews all faculty files requesting promotion and/or tenure in the tenure track. A number of issues have been identified regarding the construction of the files, which result in requests for additional documentation, and slowing of the review process. Several individuals and committees have requested clarification regarding documentation requirements for key file components.

Purpose of the Guidelines: To enhance current Promotion and Tenure (P&T) practices by providing clarification on common issues identified with tenure and tenure track faculty file review in an effort to ensure consistent, systematic, and transparent P&T processes.

Overview of the Process: The School faculty defines the criteria, the Department Chair (in Schools with Departments) and the P&T Committee make the case as to whether each criterion has been met. The external letters and the final review of the file at the level of the Provost are the ‘quality checks.’

Key Issues Identified: All files are reviewed with respect to candidate’s contributions to and trajectory for *research/publication/art-making/performance, teaching, and service*. Key issues identified in file construction have centered on insufficient documentation of research/scholarly/creative activities and contributions. Thus, many of the clarifications provided in this document are focused on research and/or creative activity in the arts. The research component is critical to Tulane’s continued classification by the Carnegie Foundation as a “Research University (Very High Research Activity).” (See <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications/index.asp>) Please refer to the Appendix for key items to include in the P&T files.

I. Analysis of candidate’s file

- a. The analyses of the file (provided separately by the Department Chair (in Schools with Departments), P&T Committee, and Dean) are important components in the review process. These analyses provide the assessments of whether or not the criteria for promotion have been met and the summary and weighting of the evidence in making the case for promotion and tenure. [Of note, Departments/Schools should require that the candidates provide a detailed summary of their work, its significance, and their 5-year plan for continued scholarly or creative activity to assist the Department Chairs in preparing the departmental analysis].

File review sometimes reveals high variability in the quality and completeness of the analyses of the candidates’ files indicating the need for clarification regarding the information that should be included in the analysis.

b. Analysis should address the following:

- i. **Criteria for promotion:** Relationship of the candidate's progress to the school-specific criteria for promotion and tenure (e.g. does not meet, meets, or exceeds the specified criteria). Each component -- research/publication/art-making/performance, teaching, and service -- should be fully addressed in the analysis.
- ii. **Research/Creative Activity Significance:** Significance of the work and its impact on the field(s). This part of the analysis goes beyond number of publications and number/dollars in external grants and discusses the impact of the publications, art-making, or performance (e.g. high quality journals, top academic publishers in the candidate's field, ground-breaking work, citation indices as appropriate, quality of the exhibition/performance venues, and so on) and the importance of the funding (if any) in laying the groundwork and springboard for future research and other initiatives.

If appropriate, particular attention should be paid to discussing contributions to collaborative and transdisciplinary research efforts (such as multi-investigator grants and publications and/or dynamic research teams). Similarly, when relevant, the analysis should include a detailed discussion of non-traditional publications (online) and research outlets (networks). The analysis should also discuss any engaged research and public scholarship initiatives. Commentary should also be provided regarding the synergy of the candidate's work with the mission and strategic goals of the School, Department, and/or unit.

- iii. **Teaching:** The faculty member's teaching trajectory, including the number and level of courses taught, course evaluations, and classroom observation should be analyzed. Special mention should be made, where appropriate, of service learning and other engaged teaching initiatives. At times of major advancement, it will be appropriate for the Department/School to contact current and former students for independent assessment of teaching.
- iv. **Service:** The faculty member's participation in service to his/her Department, School, the University, and profession should be evaluated with respect to the quality and the visibility of the service.
- v. **Trajectory:** Trajectory and promise as a faculty member for research/publication/art-making/performance, teaching and service should be described (note: tenure is not a final destination, it is a waypoint in a career-long journey).

c. In most cases, the candidate's analysis/recommendation letter to the Dean is prepared by the P&T committee chairperson with input from the P&T Committee.

The final document should be reviewed and signed off by each P&T Committee member prior to forwarding the file for the next level of review. Any dissenting votes should be noted and explained in the analysis.

II. External Referees

As mentioned above, the external referees provide one of the ‘quality checks’ of the review in addition to further evidence to be used in the review process. In many cases, the most effective evaluations of a candidate’s contributions come from nationally recognized leaders from peer institutions in the relevant area of scholarship or artistic production, senior faculty members, or directors of major research or art-making programs who are independent of the candidate.

File review sometimes reveals high variability in the quality of the evaluation letters from external referees indicating the need for clarification regarding what information should be provided about the referees, what instructions should be given to external referees, and what types of external referees should be utilized in reviews.

- a. Typically dossiers for promotion to associate professor with tenure should include a minimum of **five** external letters and dossiers for promotion to full professor a minimum of **four**.
- b. It is generally expected that referees will be full professors from peer institutions. If this is not the case, justification for inclusion of the referee should be provided. In all cases, the key issue concern is the extent to which the referee has the appropriate expertise, visibility, stature, and reputation to serve as a credible commentator on a case.
- c. The letters provided by the external referees should be focused on *evaluating* whether or not the candidate has met the criteria and is deserving of the promotion requested (as opposed to letters focused on providing support or recommendation). Thus, the call letters sent to external referees should clearly outline the purpose, confidentiality, and timeframe for the review. Specifically, the call letters should ask the referee to comment if the candidate is worthy of the promotion proposed and is eligible for tenure (if relevant). Referees should also be invited (although not required) to comment on the candidate’s likelihood of promotion and/or tenure at the respective referee’s institution. In addition, a statement regarding how the candidate compares in standing to other colleagues in the field at a similar stage of career as the candidate should be provided. A sample copy of the call letter should be included with the P&T file.

Note: The external referees provide evaluation regarding the candidate’s contributions in research/art-making, teaching and service. Oftentimes, however, the referee does not have the teaching portfolio available to evaluate this component and the letter focuses on research/art-making contributions and national/international standing and service.

- d. External referees selected by the Department, Dean or P&T Committee should be independent of the candidate. That is, the external reviewers should be selected from a slate of experts who have not been collaborators (e.g. have not co-authored publications/artistic work or participated as a co-investigator) with the candidate in the last 5 years (the federal standard for defining conflicts of interest) nor has mentored or trained the candidate. If letters are included that are not independent of the candidate, then justification should be provided. If the Department or P&T Committee has difficulty obtaining appropriate external referees, they should seek the advice and guidance of the Dean's office and/or the Office of Academic Affairs and Provost.
- e. The candidate will have the opportunity to recommend reviewers who may or may not be independent (e.g., former or current mentors) of the candidate. Schools are under no obligation, however, to use more than 2 of the names, and in fact, in most circumstances should not use more than 2 referees recommended by the candidate. The candidate's Department/School and the /P&T Committee and/or Dean will select the remaining referees.
- f. A brief statement, brief biography, or CV on each referee should be provided with the P&T file. The information provided will indicate by whom the referee was identified (i.e., the Department/Dean/P&T Committee or the candidate) and why each reviewer was selected (e.g. leading figure in the candidate's field). The response status of each selected referee should be tracked and submitted with the P&T file.

III. Length of Probationary Clock Issues

As outlined in the Faculty Handbook, there are circumstances in which tenure clock extensions may be considered (both for personal and professional issues). Requests for early tenure reviews are highly unusual and normally reserved for truly extraordinary achievement and/or matters of retention in the face of competitive outside offers. If an early tenure review is unsuccessful the candidate will only be entitled to one additional year of appointment.

IV. Appointments of External Candidates with Tenure

Recommendations for appointments of new faculty at tenure rank should report the vote of appropriately enfranchised faculty and/or P&T committees. For example, all tenured faculty would vote on the appointment of an Associate Professor with tenure and all Full Professors would vote on the appointment of a Full Professor with tenure.

Appendix

Key Items to include in P&T files

- Dean's analysis
- P&T Committee analysis (signed off by all Committee members)
- Department Chair/ Department P&T analysis

- Candidate's curriculum vitae
- Candidate's 5 Year Plan
- Copy of sample call letter to external referees
- Summary of referee qualifications
- External letters (number should correspond with School requirements for level of promotion) with no more than 2 from the candidate's list of recommended referees unless a justification is provided
- Copies of relevant scholarly/artistic products
- Teaching Dossier: including a list of courses taught and undergraduate and graduate students mentored by semester, the candidate's Statement on Teaching, and course evaluation summaries.