

The College of Arts and Sciences Policies and Procedures for Retention, Tenure, and Promotion

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I. Introduction

The College of Arts and Sciences' Policies and Procedures for Retention, Tenure, and Promotion supplement the procedures and criteria outlined in the University of Alabama Faculty Handbook. Faculty members are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the University and College policies and with the more specific procedures and standards contained in their own department or program's tenure and promotion guidelines. Departmental criteria may exceed College criteria in rigor, but in no case may they be less rigorous.

The preparation of a file for tenure or promotion is the primary responsibility of the faculty member involved. Departmental committees, chairpersons, the College Tenure and Promotion Committee, and the dean of the College make separate evaluations based upon the strength of the file submitted by the candidate; they do not serve as investigative bodies. Tenure and promotion files should, therefore, be as complete as possible, providing substantial evidence of effective teaching, research/creative achievement, and service. (See IV. Preparation of Tenure and/or Promotion Dossier.) Candidates should ensure that their record of publication, grants, performances, and other scholarly work, as outlined in the *curriculum vitae*, accords with the information presented in the submitted dossier.

Unless the candidate's letter of appointment requires an earlier review, or the provost has granted an extension, tenure decisions are mandatory during a probationary faculty member's sixth year as a full-time member of the faculty. The Faculty Handbook states that a faculty member usually completes at least four years in rank before being considered for promotion. (See Chapter 2, III., of the Faculty Handbook.)

It is not the general practice of the College to make early decisions (before the sixth year of service at the University) on tenure or promotion unless the case presented by the candidate is clearly exceptional in all three areas of research, teaching, and service.

II. Deadlines

A. Notification of Initiation of Tenure and/or Promotion Process

The College deadline for candidates to notify their chairperson of their intention to initiate the tenure and/or promotion process is May 1 prior to the academic year of application. Departments may require an earlier deadline than the College. When a candidate notifies the chairperson, a resulting discussion about external letters of review is expected. (See III. C. External Letters of Evaluation for Tenure and Promotion.)

B. Completed Dossiers for Tenure and/or Promotion

The candidate should publish their completed dossier in the online Tenure and Promotion module of the Faculty Activity Report system no later than October 1 of the year of application. The chairperson will review the T and P module for completeness and will activate the department committee if the dossier is ready. Should items be missing, the chair will unpublish the T and P module so that the

faculty member can insert the missing data. The chair should activate the reviewed T and P module for the departmental committee no later than October 15. The dossier, departmental committee report, the chair's report, and any explanatory or rebuttal statements by the candidate must be published for the Dean's Office. All of the material submitted by the department should reach the Dean's Office by November 1.

The dean will allow access to the College's Promotion and Tenure Committee for review. The College's Tenure and Promotion committee may agree with the recommendation made by the departmental committee and/or chairperson or it may disagree with the recommendation. The College Committee's recommendation will be provided to the department chairperson and the candidate in order that a supplemental or rebuttal statement by the candidate may be submitted for review by the divisional committee.

For contents of dossier see Section IV. A. Minimum Requirements for Dossiers.

C. Deadlines for First-Year Faculty

First-year faculty should consult with their chairs regarding the date by which they must publish their dossiers for review by the department chair. Dossiers are then reviewed by the departmental tenure and promotion committee, which writes a recommendation regarding retention. The department chair then reviews the dossier and makes a recommendation. The file is due to the Dean's Office by February 1. After the first year, faculty are to meet deadlines outlined above, in B. Completed Dossiers for Tenure and/or Promotion. See also III. E. Process for Retention Reviews of Probationary Faculty.

III. Process

The tenure process and the promotion process are the same and follow the procedures outlined below. The only difference is that candidates for tenure have their dossiers reviewed by the department's tenure committee, while candidates for promotion have their dossiers reviewed by the department's promotion committee.

A. Stages of the Tenure and/or Promotion Process

1. Application is reviewed by departmental tenure and/or promotion committee—recommendation is made. Candidates have the opportunity to provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement to this recommendation.*
2. Application is reviewed by departmental chairperson—recommendation is made. Candidates have the opportunity to provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement to this recommendation.*
3. Application is reviewed by College promotion and tenure committee—recommendation is made. Candidates have the opportunity to provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement to this recommendation.*
4. Application is reviewed by the dean of the College—recommendation is made. Candidates have the opportunity to provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement to this recommendation.*
5. Application is reviewed by the University provost—decision is made.

*If the candidate chooses to provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement, it is

reviewed by the departmental committee and/or chairperson whose recommendation elicited the candidate's response. Following this review, the candidate is informed of the chairperson's or committee's decision regarding the rebuttal, and the dossier is forwarded for review at the next stage. Candidate rebuttal/explanatory statements and any response statements automatically become part of the T&P module within the FAR. Rebuttal and review can occur at the level of department committee, chairperson, college committee, and/or the dean.

B. Participants in the Tenure and/or Promotion Process*

Departmental Tenure Committee

The departmental tenure committee will discuss the merits of each candidate and take a vote with respect to recommending endorsement of tenure. The committee chairperson shall write summaries of both favorable and unfavorable opinions expressed by committee members. The purpose of these summaries is to provide useful information to the departmental chairperson, the College tenure and promotion committee, the dean, and the provost. In cases where the committee's vote is not unanimous, the committee chair should, where appropriate, attempt to identify the grounds for dissent, so that the votes can be appropriately contextualized. If committee members choose to add their own letters of dissent to the summary letter of the committee chair, these letters of dissent must be signed by the dissenting faculty member(s).

The summary of the committee chair, along with any written statements submitted by the committee members, the committee recommendations, and a numerical record of the vote on the recommendation, are to be included in the committee report. The report will also include statements assessing the candidate's record in terms of the standards set by the departmental guidelines. The committee report should explicitly state the number of votes for and against tenure and/or promotion. Faculty abstentions from voting are strongly discouraged. There can be recusals, in cases of potential conflict of interest, and in such cases there should be an explanation to the department chair as appropriate.

In the FAR, the department tenure committee report is published directly to the faculty member, with the department chair receiving notification by email. When the committee report is published to the FAR, the candidate may provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement. This statement then becomes part of the dossier.

2. Departmental Chair

The department chairperson must prepare a written statement either endorsing or dissenting from the committee's recommendation. The chairperson's statement should independently interpret the significance of the evidence in the file. The chairperson will publish his/her statement to the FAR at which time the candidate may provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement. This statement then becomes part of the dossier.

3. College Tenure and Promotion Committee

The College Tenure and Promotion Committee reviews all tenure and promotion materials and makes an independent recommendation that becomes part of the candidate's dossier. The candidate can provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement to the committee's recommendation. This statement is reviewed by the committee and becomes part of the dossier. Each member of the committee shall participate in voting on both tenure and promotion recommendations unless he/she feels unable to treat a particular case objectively.

4. Dean

The dean reviews all tenure and promotion cases and makes an independent recommendation that becomes part of the candidate's dossier. The candidate can provide an explanatory and/or rebuttal statement to the dean's recommendation. This statement is reviewed by the dean and becomes part of the dossier.

5. Provost

The provost reviews all tenure and promotion cases and makes the final decision on granting or denying tenure and/or promotion.

**Regarding Joint or Split Appointments* Tenure and/or promotion are granted to faculty in only one department. In the case of joint appointments the faculty member is expected to meet the tenure and promotion guidelines in the department of primary appointment. However, in the case of faculty who carry joint appointments or are involved in interdisciplinary research, every effort should be made to assess a candidate's work outside his/her home department, with this assessment being included as part of the candidate's dossier. This assessment is done by the chair of the other department—a separate review in the FAR. This other chair may choose to invite input from faculty in his/her department.

In cases of joint or split appointments departments may vote to include faculty from other departments on a tenure and/or promotion committee.

C. External Letters of Evaluation for Tenure and Promotion

For promotion and tenure cases, external letters of evaluation must be included in a candidate's dossier, as specified by the University of Alabama Faculty Handbook. The candidate should provide a list of four to six experts in his or her field to the departmental chair by May 1 of the year of application (which is five months before the deadline for dossier completion). The College expects that at least four letters of external review will be included in the candidate's application file. The departmental chairperson must request evaluating statements from at least two of those persons suggested by the candidate, but the chairperson is not limited to names furnished by the candidate. Should one or both of the candidate's suggested reviewers not respond, the chair is not required to seek out other letters from the candidates list to be part of the final minimum of four.

Confidential letters of review have the greatest impact. Confidentiality of external reviews is an issue to be decided by the candidate. A candidate's choice (to waive or not to waive the right to view external letters) must be documented in the FAR when faculty create their T&P module. The waiver of rights to review letters is irrevocable and precludes the candidate from seeing any portion of the letters. The chair must inform all external reviewers as to whether their letters will be

confidential.

Because most of the tenure and promotion process has become digital, the Dean's office no longer requires hard copy letters of evaluation.

External letters of review must address a specific tenure and/or promotion case and be dated no earlier than January 1 of the year of a candidate's application.

Guidelines for Obtaining External Letters of Evaluation

- The College expects a minimum of four external reviews.
- Reviewers must be at or above the rank being applied for by the candidate.
- Reviewers are expected to be a scholar or creative expert in the candidate's field.
- The candidate should suggest possible reviewers from a variety of institutions, excluding where the candidate received his/her terminal degree. In no case should the reviewer have participated in the degree evaluation of the candidate.
- The chairperson and the Departmental Tenure/Promotion Committee can suggest potential reviewers.
- The candidate will meet with the chair to review all possible reviewers.
- The candidate may appeal to the chair not to consider some of the potential reviewers.
- A letter signed by the candidate stating whether he/she waives the right to view external letters must be included in the dossier. In the online system, this is an option that can be selected during the process.
- The chair and the candidate should select appropriate materials to be sent to the reviewers.
- The chairperson requests the letters of review (See sample letter in Appendix A).
- Include the *curriculum vitae* of all external reviewers.
- Include a summary chart of reviewers (prepared by the chair), identifying specifically who suggested each reviewer (candidate, chair, colleague).

D. Additional Considerations for Tenure and Promotion

1. Additions and Deletions of New Evidence to a Dossier

Generally, no new evidence is added to the dossier after it has been transmitted to the departmental committee. In extremely unusual circumstances when new evidence becomes available which seems to the dean to be significant, the dean may reconvene the departmental and college committees and ask these committees and the departmental chairperson to assess the new evidence. Once a candidate publishes the dossier, no material should be deleted from it.

2. Withdrawal of Application

A candidate may withdraw his/her file at any point, except when University policy or an agreement at the time of appointment require a tenure decision to be made about the candidate that year. External letters will be removed and filed in the Dean's Office.

E. Process for Retention Reviews of Probationary Faculty

Each year the Departmental Review and Retention Committee conducts a review of the professional progress exhibited by each non-tenured faculty member, and recommends either retention or non-retention for each person considered. (Like the tenure and promotion process, the retention process uses the T&P module within the FAR.) The review and recommendation are based upon materials provided by the faculty member with guidance from the chairperson/director. A written statement shall be prepared evaluating current strengths and weaknesses of the faculty member along with any suggestions for improvement. Reviews of probationary faculty should be specific and in writing, addressing the candidate's strengths and any areas requiring improvement.

The committee's statements and recommendations are published to the candidate's dossier in the FAR, activating the chairperson's access to these materials. The chairperson then writes a statement to the candidate regarding any additional strengths or weaknesses that he/she may perceive. The chairperson then publishes his/her statement, which activates the dean's access to the two recommendations and the candidate's dossier so that he/she may review and comment.

The review process ends with the dean's review unless the dean decides that the probationary faculty member's appointment should not be continued or the review occurs two years before mandatory tenure decision date. In these cases, the dean makes a recommendation, which is forwarded to the provost for final decision regarding retention.

The deadline for dossier publication to the FAR is the same as tenure and promotion cases (Oct 1 to department chair, November 1 to the Dean's Office) with the exception of first-year faculty. First-year faculty publish to the T&P module within the FAR supporting material outlining their progress toward tenure and promotion by January 8 (this is a recommended date; dates for first-year faculty FAR publication may vary by department). Departmental committee and chair retention responses for first-year faculty are due to the Dean's Office by February 1.

IV. Preparation of Tenure and/or Promotion Dossier

A. Minimum Requirements for the Dossier

- Recommendations from
 - dean
 - college committee
 - department chair
 - department committee
- Rebuttal or explanatory statements from the candidate (if any). Statements from dean, department chair or committees addressing the candidate's statements (if any)
- Applicant's cover letter for each retention year and the promotion and tenure year
- Curriculum vita—comprehensive and updated annually
- Student evaluations are auto-populated from SOI data

- Letters from external evaluators (for tenure and promotion cases only)
- Letter of appointment and other subsequent agreements
- Work load history auto-populates sequentially by semester
- Departmental tenure and promotion criteria
- Annual retention review letters (tenure cases only) are automatically included
- Evidence concerning the quality and effectiveness of instruction
- Evidence concerning quality and quantity of productive research, publication, scholarly achievement, and creative activity
- Evidence concerning responsible academic citizenship
- Evidence concerning Learner-Centered outcomes

B. Documentation of Quality of Instruction

- Statement of pedagogical philosophy
- Outcome measures
- Student opinions of teaching
- A summary and documentation of student discursive comments solicited by the department. Describe process for collecting these.
- Comments by former students
- Solicited or unsolicited letters of support from others
- Career accomplishments of graduates
- Evaluations from academic visitors to the classroom
- Evaluations from colleagues within the department
- Evaluations from colleagues outside the department
- Evaluations from College of Arts and Sciences Teaching Fellows
- Samples of original instructional materials (e.g., handouts, tests, lectures, outlines)
- Evidence of innovative uses of technology in courses taught
- Course syllabi

C. Suggestions for Documentation of Scholarly Achievement/Creative Activity

The dossier may include these or other materials:

- A description of scholarly achievements and goals
- Copies of scholarly achievement or creative activity—include all authors of each publication or creative activity
- Journal articles authored—include all authors (refereed and non-refereed)
- Citation indexes (i.e. Social Science Citation Index, Science Citation Index)
- Breakdown of refereed scholarship and non-refereed scholarship
- Books authored
- Book chapters authored
- Book/article editing
- Book reviews
- Encyclopedia entries
- Conference proceedings and types of presentations
- Acceptance/rejection rates of journals where articles were submitted/published

- Circulation rates of journals where articles were submitted/published
- Prestige ratings of journals or publishers
- Funded research/extramural funding
- Creative performances as indicated by local, regional, national, or international stature
- Exhibitions as indicated by local, regional, national, or international stature

D. Suggestions for Documentation of Academic Citizenship

Provide evidence of the following:

- Professional service beyond The University of Alabama
- Service to the community
- Departmental service
- College service
- University service

E. General Considerations

- Start early
- Seek advice from colleagues
- Work with your chairperson
- Organize your materials carefully
- Organize by content area

V. Committees

A. Composition and Duties of Departmental Committees

Departmental committees are constituted for the following purposes:

- Making recommendations for conferral, denial, or deferral of tenure;
- Making recommendations for or against awarding promotion;
- Conducting annual professional progress reviews, making retention recommendations, and voting on the retention of probationary faculty.

1. Departmental Tenure and Promotion Committees

During October the senior professor in the department convenes a Departmental Tenure Committee and/or a Departmental Promotion Committee. The senior professor in each department is the individual who has held the highest rank in the department for the longest time at the University. When convened, the committee elects the chair for the review process. The promotion committee consists of all departmental faculty above the rank of the candidate being considered, with the exception of the department chair. The tenure committee consists of all tenured faculty within the department, with the exception of the department chair.

2. Departmental Retention Committee

The Departmental Review and Retention Committee reviews all probationary

faculty on a yearly basis and is charged with recommending retention or non-retention for untenured faculty. This committee can be made up of all tenured faculty in the department, or a portion thereof. The means for establishing this committee should be written in departmental guidelines and voted on by the entire departmental faculty. Any changes in the way this committee is chosen must be approved by the entire departmental faculty. The department chairperson is not a member of these committees, but may attend meetings when invited by the committees; however, the department chairperson shall not be present when a vote is taken.

In cases where there are fewer than three department members eligible to serve on the retention, promotion, or tenure committees, the dean, after consultation with the departmental members eligible to serve, appoints additional members to the committees from other departments with related interests. In such a case, the committee chairperson must be a member of the candidate's department, if any member of that department is eligible to serve. If not, the dean appoints the committee chair.

B. Composition of the College Committee on Tenure and Promotion

The College Committee on Tenure and Promotion shall be constituted as follows:

- The committee shall consist of four professors and four associate professors, all of whom shall possess tenure, and none of whom shall be candidates for promotion during their term of appointment.
- The presiding officer of the committee shall be a representative of the College dean but need not be a member of the Dean's Office staff, and he or she shall not vote.
- The dean shall appoint the presiding officer. The remainder of the committee shall be selected in the following manner:
 - Annually, each department shall be invited to select from its membership one professor and one associate professor for nomination to the dean of the College.
 - The dean shall appoint the members of the committee from the nominations made. Appointments shall be made for a two-year term; however, to insure continuity, initially two professors and two associate professors shall be appointed for one-year terms.
 - In making appointments, the dean of the College shall insure that a minimum of two members (one associate and one professor) represent each of the College's divisions (e.g., humanities and fine arts, natural sciences and mathematics, and the social sciences). The remaining two members of the committee (one associate and one professor) serve as at-large representatives.
- Each member of the committee shall participate by voting on both tenure and promotion recommendations unless he/she feels unable to treat a particular case objectively.
- Departmental chairpersons shall not be eligible to serve on the committee.

VI. Departmental Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion

The full faculty of each department shall establish departmental standards for tenure and promotion appropriate to their discipline. These standards may be more rigorous, but not less rigorous than those listed in the University of Alabama Faculty Handbook and this document. At a minimum, the departmental standards should generally describe the sorts of criteria for judging excellence in teaching within a discipline.

Departmental guidelines should also delineate different criteria for promotion as opposed to tenure, as well as different expectations in promotions to various ranks.

VII. Appendix

Sample Letter of Request to Potential External Reviewers

Dear

Dr. ———, who is currently an assistant/associate professor in the Department of ——— in the College of Arts and Sciences at The University of Alabama is being considered by this department for promotion to associate professor/promotion to associate professor with tenure/promotion to full professor/promotion to full professor with tenure. We would greatly appreciate your help in evaluating her/his scholarly achievements.

For faculty members seeking promotion to associate professor or full professor, our criteria for promotion and/or tenure require that the candidate present a record of research, publication, creative activity, and scholarly achievement appropriate to his/her discipline and fields of specialization; this record must be sufficient in both quantity and quality to demonstrate the potential for progress toward an outstanding level of performance.

Enclosed, along with the faculty member's dossier, please find a copy of our College and University guidelines for tenure and promotion. In making your evaluation of the candidate's scholarship, please assess whether Dr. ——— 's research and professional contributions meet the standards outlined there. In addition, it will be particularly helpful if you would:

- State if the candidate is known personally to you and, if so, how long and in what capacity,
- Evaluate the candidate in comparison to several other scholars who are at the same point in their careers and in the same field of study,
- Comment on the degree of recognition already achieved by Dr. ——— in her/his discipline, noting any distinctive contribution,
- Evaluate the scope and significance of the candidate's research interests and activities in terms of their importance,
- Evaluate the candidate's promise for further growth as a scholar,
- Provide any additional insights that may be helpful to the department and to the Promotion and Tenure Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences in determining whether or not to recommend promotion/tenure.

There is no need to comment on the teaching aspects of Dr. ———'s record as these will be addressed separately by other reviewers on campus.

The identity of an external reviewer will be kept confidential to the extent provided by the law of the State of Alabama. Efforts are made to limit review of external review letters to appropriate tenured faculty in the Department, the department chair, the dean, the College-wide tenure and promotion committee members, and other appropriate University administrators. The candidate has waived the right to view the letter. We request that you not communicate with the candidate, or with other members of the Department or the College, regarding your evaluation or the review process.

For your convenience, we enclose Dr. ———'s curriculum vita, which includes a bibliography of her/his work and reprints and/or examples of some of the candidate's most recent work. We would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience since the review process requires that all materials be in hand early in the academic year.

You may return your letter on your departmental letterhead either electronically through the FAR portal for external reviewers or in hard copy. Please also attach a copy of your own *curriculum vitae*, as this is also part of the formal record.

I am well aware that reviews of this kind require considerable effort and appreciate your willingness to help us. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [email address].

Sincerely,

[department chair]