



## Guidelines for department chairs in preparing dossiers recommending promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure<sup>1</sup>, July 2023

The purpose of these guidelines is to help the candidate and department prepare the strongest possible dossier for promotion to associate professor with tenure. These guidelines should fit the majority of, but perhaps not all, situations. If you feel your candidate's accomplishments and activities need a slightly different approach, you are welcome to make changes in consultation with the Senior Associate Dean. Departments are also welcome to include additional material beyond what is listed here when useful.

Candidates for tenure at Cornell University are expected to present an exceptional record, to rank very highly compared to colleagues in the same field at similar stages in their careers at peer institutions, and to demonstrate leadership or potential leadership in their field. University considerations in the decision to award tenure for those who will be at the Associate Professor level after the dossier review include "excellence in carrying out the responsibilities of the position, and unusual promise for continued achievement."<sup>2</sup>

**Special Considerations for Joint Appointments.** In the case of a joint appointment, notification must be sent to dual/joint or funding department(s)/college(s)/unit(s) to allow for participation and/or financial planning. It is essential that the secondary department's tenured faculty be involved in deliberations using the same information as the tenure-home department as per any agreements in place regarding the tenure process for the specific Assistant Professor.

### A. Timeline

Electronic PDF dossiers containing information for promotion to associate professor with tenure should be delivered by the department via Secure File Transfer (SFT) (<https://sft.cornell.edu/login/>) to the Dean's assistant (Cindy Thompson) using the following deadlines:

- June 1 for an effective tenure date of November 1
- August 1 for an effective tenure date of February 1
- September 1 for an effective tenure date of April 1
- December 1 for an effective tenure date of July 1

Once the electronic PDF dossier is delivered via SFT, it is reviewed to be sure all relevant sections have been submitted. An ad hoc committee (made up of 2 faculty within CHE and 1 outside of CHE) is selected to review the dossier and make a recommendation to the Dean. Six to eight weeks is a normal time for review by the ad hoc committee. After review at the College level, the following documents are added to the dossier:

- the ad hoc committee report,

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<sup>1</sup> The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has similar guidelines, which served as a key resource in the development of the current document. The [CALS guidelines](#) can be found here:

<sup>2</sup> [University Criteria](#)

- any additional materials requested by the ad hoc committee or by the Senior Associate Dean
- a letter of recommendation from the Dean to the Provost

FACTA (the Faculty Advisory Committee on Tenure Appointments) will advise the provost. Following FACTA review, the Provost conveys the dossier to the Cornell University Board of Trustees. Approval of the award of tenure, or promotion and tenure will be made by the Board of Trustees and conveyed by a letter from the President to the candidate.

Procedures following a negative tenure decision at the departmental level can be found here: [Faculty Handbook for appealing decisions for tenure.](#)

## **B. Documentation Required**

ALL solicitations for letters must be done by the department and not the candidate. Do not include any letter in more than one area: peer letter, student letter. The dossier should be submitted in PDF format using the bookmarks outlined below (i.e., numbered bold headings are bookmarks; lettered subheadings are sub-bookmarks) Materials should be addressed to the Dean but delivered to the Senior Associate Dean. All materials assembled supporting the evaluation and recommendation are regarded as confidential to be shared only with those involved in the decision process.

Unit Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

### **1. Department Head Recommendation**

Letter from Department Chair to the Dean with the recommendation regarding promotion and tenure. The letter should include the date of meeting and vote of tenured faculty and reasons for any objections, reservations, or abstentions. The vote should be taken after the tenured faculty have reviewed the full documentation, and there has been opportunity for discussion. (Letters from the faculty with their evaluation and the reasons for their vote are to be included in the documentation, see "Faculty Letters" below.)

The letter should include the Chair's Evaluation of the performance of the candidate in each function for which he or she carries responsibility. This should be a thoughtful analysis of the relationship of the candidate to the present and developing mission of the department and College. The Chair should comment on the quality of journals, presses, and other venues where the candidate's work has appeared. The letter should also address the candidate's teaching or extension/outreach work. The letter should address any disagreements and matters of serious concern in the file, as well as any abstentions.

If the department uses a departmental review committee, its report should be included in "Faculty Letters" (below), not here.

#### **Checklist for Section 1. Department recommendation:**

- Unit head recommendation letter (Internal Review Committee letters are included in section 2 below.)
- Secondary program's letter (if appropriate)

## 2. Individual Faculty Assessments

Please include letters from each tenured faculty member providing an evaluation of the candidate in reference to the considerations above and the individual's vote. In addition to the letter, each professor's vote must be documented. This may be included in each professor's letter, or ballots used in the decision can be included in the dossier. If the department uses a departmental review committee, its report should be included in this section.

### Checklist for Section 2. Faculty Assessments:

- Faculty Letters from each tenured faculty member in the home unit.
- When relevant, a departmental review committee report.

## 3. External Reviews

ALL solicitations for letters must be done by the department and **not** by the candidate. A copy of the letter requesting the evaluation must be included in the dossier. We recommend contacting external reviewers to determine their availability prior to sending them material. Note: Letters solicited from peer reviewers can be subpoenaed as part of a legal process but are treated by the university as confidential documents. Letters solicited from students, Cornell colleagues and others are similarly confidential and should not be shared with outside peer reviewers.

How much of the dossier is made available to the external reviewers: The candidate has the right to determine the exact subset of their scholarly work that is accessible to the external reviewer.

Recommendations to the candidate:

- Chosen content should be discussed with the chair but must include the CV.
- Chosen content should be easy to navigate with important items highlighted. A pdf dossier with bookmarks is recommended.
- The research, teaching, and/or extension statements should be considered.
- If the visibility of a publication requires payment of a fee or the purchase of a book, then steps must be taken to provide access.
- Do not share those documents that are not (yet) intended for free public viewing.
- External reviewers are not in the position to interpret course evaluations so that data should never be included for external review. On the other hand, course syllabi should be included.
- Please review <https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/news/the-tenure-track-project/d-external-reviewer-selection/>

**a. Table of Evaluators:** The role of external evaluators is to assess the candidate's accomplishments, stature in the field, and future promise. External evaluators should be given a charge that is as specific as possible and should be provided with as much material relating to the candidate's performance as is conveniently possible. In your request to external reviewers, please include a request to the reviewer to please provide the full details of the contact he/she has had with the candidate through his/her career.

The file should include two tables with information regarding reviewers. One table includes external reviewers selected by the department; the other includes external reviewers suggested by the candidate. Each of these tables must include the following information: names and institutions of all reviewers invited to serve as reviewers and whether the reviewer declined or agreed to the

review. Include in the tables individuals who were invited but failed to respond to the invitation and noting that this was the case.

**i. Evaluators Selected by the Department:** Letters of evaluation from at least five, but not more than seven, recognized leaders in the field outside Cornell who have neither been closely associated with, nor selected by, the candidate. The letters should request evaluation, not support. The request letter should state the criteria listed above which the faculty will use in judging a candidate for the awarding of tenure. The letters should provide an evaluation of the quality of the candidate's work and its impact on the scholarship of the field. In selecting external evaluators and when possible, departments are encouraged to select at least one well-established leader in the larger discipline who is not working in the same sub-discipline as the candidate. The purpose of these evaluations is to understand the breadth of impact and promise of the candidate's work.<sup>3</sup>

**ii. Evaluators Suggested by the Candidate:** The department should also solicit letters from evaluators suggested by the candidate. Two of the evaluators can be within arm's length and should not include Cornell faculty. These letters should request evaluation, not support. Four to six letters should be submitted. The request letter should state the criteria listed above which the faculty will use in judging a candidate's qualifications for tenure. The letters should provide an evaluation of the quality of the candidate's work and its impact on the scholarship of the field. If the evaluator is a co-author or collaborator of the candidate, the letter should address the contribution of the candidate to the collaborative work.

**d. CVs of Evaluators** selected by the department.

**e. CVs of Evaluators** suggested by candidate.

#### **Checklist for Section 3. External Reviews:**

- List of all reviewers solicited in table format. The list should be separated into 2 categories:
  - Evaluators suggested by the department. (minimum of 5 and not more than 7)
  - Evaluators suggested by the candidate. (minimum of 4 and not more than 6)
  - Solicitation letters for each type of evaluator
- CV's of evaluators selected by the department.
- CV's of evaluators suggested by the candidate.

**4. Candidate CV.** The candidate should provide a complete and comprehensive CV.

#### **Checklist for Section 4. CV:**

- CV of the candidate

#### **5. Candidate Statements**

**a. Teaching Statement.** The candidate should provide a statement describing teaching goals and accomplishments.

**b. Research Statement.** The candidate should provide a statement describing goals and objectives for the faculty's research program and a statement of substantive research accomplishments, activities, or discoveries. The overall intent is to make a compelling case for the ability of the

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<sup>3</sup> [HR Guidelines for Tenure Track Promotions](#)

candidate to provide leadership for his/her discipline in discovering new knowledge through creative analysis and synthesis. When relevant this includes information on external funding (a separate section on external funding can also be included if preferred. Include Google Scholar metrics. Candidates for promotion should create a Google Scholar Profile and include the link so outside reviewers as well as relevant college faculty can easily access the candidate's publications and indicators of impact.

**c. Extension Statement.** An extension statement is required only of faculty who have a formal extension appointment. The candidate should provide a description of the goals and accomplishments of extension programming, and a description of the approach used to meet the goals of the extension program. This should include evidence that the extension program addresses audience needs in a timely manner, is relevant and of high quality, is based on a foundation of research, and has made an impact on participants (stakeholders). Stakeholder Evaluation. Include a minimum of 5 and not more than 7 stakeholder letters in the extension program independent of other external letters, serving an equivalent role as letters from students to evaluate teaching or letters from advisees and include CVs for the stakeholders.

**d. Service Statement.** Evidence of service to the community, the department, the college, and the university.<sup>4</sup>

#### Checklist for Section 5. Statements:

- Teaching Statement
- Research Statement
  - When relevant, include information on external funding.
  - Report Google Scholar metrics
- Extension Statement
  - Stakeholder evaluations (minimum of 5 to and not more than 7 letters)
  - CVs for all stakeholders
- Service Statement

#### 6. Teaching Materials

- a. Courses Taught.** The dossier should include a listing of courses taught each year and enrollments in each. A course syllabus should also be submitted for these courses. For team-taught courses, include a statement of specific involvement by the candidate. Note: Indicate whether the courses were taught at Cornell or elsewhere, as in the case of recently-hired faculty.
- b. Student Course Evaluation Summaries.** These should be summarized in a table and not prepared by the candidate.
- c. Student Letters.** Letters from students who have completed the candidate's course(s) should be solicited by the department chair. There should be three to five advising letters and five to ten teaching letters submitted in the dossier. For the advising letters no more than 50% should come from students identified by the faculty member. For the teaching letters, a random sample of students who completed the course may be contacted. Students are sometimes reluctant to write a letter due to fear of reprisals. The Department may choose to redact student names from letters in this case but must keep letters with signatures on file for

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<sup>4</sup> [Review process for tenure](#)

verification upon request in the case of an appeal. A copy of the letter requesting the evaluation must be included.

**d. Faculty Course Assessment.** When part of departmental guidelines, the dossier should include a statement from a departmental colleague(s) assessing the candidate's teaching and course materials<sup>5</sup>

**Checklist for Section 6. Teaching:**

- List of courses taught.
- Course syllabus for each course.
- Student course evaluation summaries in table format
- Student letters.
  - Advising letters (minimum of 3 and not more than 5)
  - Teaching letters (minimum of 5 and not more than 10)
  - A copy of the letter requesting evaluation.
- Faculty Course Assessment of teaching and course materials.

**C. APPENDIX:**

- Publications.** The candidate must submit representative publications showcasing his or her highest quality work.
- Position Description.** Please include a copy of the original letter of appointment with salary information redacted, a copy of the original position description, and any subsequent letters, which altered expectations of the position and again with any salary information redacted. Any written response by the candidate to the above should be included as well.
- Annual Reviews.** Include copies of the letter sent to the candidate following each annual review. Include candidate comments submitted in response to reviews, if any. If missing annual reviews, the Chair must address reasons in Chair's Letter or include a statement of explanation here.

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<sup>5</sup> Faculty [Handbook](#)