



## Guidelines for department chairs in preparing dossiers recommending promotion to professor<sup>1</sup> July 2020

The purpose of these guidelines is to help the candidate and department prepare the strongest possible dossier for promotion to professor. 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.

Promotion to professor is earned and awarded in recognition of distinguished research and educational accomplishment, and awarded in recognition of fulfillment of the expectations that come with tenure. Different people meet these promotion criteria at different rates, so the time in rank as an associate professor before an individual is considered for promotion to professor is somewhat diverse. However, the normal time for review to promotions to professor is in the sixth year after promotion to associate professor. For procedures pertaining to early promotion requests, please see section D below.

**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 full professors 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 Associate Professor.

### A. TIMELINE

Electronic PDF dossiers containing information for promotion to full professor should be delivered by the department via Cornell Drop Box to the Dean's assistant, Cindy Thompson, ctm37, using the following dates:

- July 1st for an effective promotion date of November 1
- September 1st for an effective promotion date of January 1
- December 1st for an effective promotion date of April 1
- March 1st for an effective promotion date of July 1

Once the electronic PDF dossier is delivered via Cornell Drop Box, it is reviewed to be sure all relevant sections have been submitted. An ad hoc committee is selected that includes 2 faculty within CHE and 1 faculty outside of CHE to undertake a review of 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 included in the dossier: the ad hoc committee report, any additional materials requested by the ad hoc committee or by the Senior Associate Dean, and a letter of recommendation to the Provost from the Dean and Senior Associate Dean.

Approval of the promotion will be made by the Provost and conveyed by a letter from the President to the candidate.

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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: [CALS appointment procedures](#).

Procedures following a negative decision at the departmental level can be found here in the [Faculty Handbook](#):

## **B. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED**

The dossier should be submitted in PDF format using the bookmarks outlined below. 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.

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

Letter from Department Chair to the Dean with the recommendation regarding promotion. The letter should include the date of meeting and vote of tenured full professor faculty, giving reasons for any objections, reservations, or abstentions. The vote should be taken after the tenured full professors on the 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.

### **2. Individual Faculty Assessments**

Please include letters from each tenured full professor providing an evaluation of the candidate in reference to the considerations above. 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. Faculty letters should be listed by faculty name.

### **3. External Reviews**

ALL solicitations for letters must be done by the department and not the candidate. A copy of the solicitation letter must be included. 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.

#### **a. Table of Evaluators:**

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 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 invitation (noting that this was the case).

**b. 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 should 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>2</sup>

**c. Evaluators Suggested by the Candidate.**

The department should also solicit letters from at least 4, but not more than six. These 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. If the evaluator is a co-author or collaborator of the candidate, the letter should address the contribution of the candidate to the work.

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.

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

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

**4. Candidate CV**

The candidate should provide a complete and comprehensive CV.

**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 his/her 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 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). 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). Include administrative and

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<sup>2</sup> [dossier schedule](#)

leadership responsibilities and roles the candidate has assumed. Stakeholder Evaluation include 5-7 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.

**d. Service Statement.**

Evidence of service to the community, the department, the college, and the university.<sup>3</sup>

**6. Teaching Materials**

**a. Courses Taught.**

The dossier should include a listing of courses taught each year since tenure was awarded and enrollments in each. A course outline or 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 newly-hired faculty).

**b. Student Course Evaluations.**

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, based on names of students at Cornell (or from the candidate's former institution). There should be 3 to 5 Advising letters and 5 to 10 teaching letters submitted in the dossier. Letters from students identified by the faculty member should not be more than 50% of all the letters submitted. 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 verification upon request in the case of an appeal. A copy of the letter requesting 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>4</sup>.

**7. APPENDIX:**

**1. Publications.**

The candidate must submit representative publications, in electronic form, showcasing his or her highest quality work. Each sub-bookmark will be the name of the publication.

**2. Position Description.**

Please include a copy of the original letter of appointment with salary information redacted only, no addendums needed (ie: start-up information), a copy of the original position description, and any subsequent letters, which altered expectations of the position (again with any salary information redacted). Any written response by the candidate to the above should be included as well. Include a copy of the letter approving promotion to associate professor with tenure.

**3. Annual Reviews.**

Include copies of the letter sent to the candidate following each annual review since promotion to Associate Professor. Include candidate comments submitted in response to reviews, if any. If missing annual reviews,

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<sup>3</sup> [Review process](#)

<sup>4</sup> [University Faculty Handbook](#)

Chairs' must address reasons in Chair's Letter (Section 1) or include a statement of explanation here. These should be sorted by year with most recent first.

#### **D. Procedures pertaining to requests for early promotion to the Professor title**

At Cornell, the expected timing is that faculty come up for promotion to the title of Professor no earlier than in the 6<sup>th</sup> year after tenure. This policy is in place because it allows for a sufficient period after tenure to determine whether the candidate has demonstrated the sustained productivity that is expected of faculty at the rank of Professor. As noted in the Faculty Handbook, "Promotion to Professor is earned and awarded in recognition of distinguished research and educational accomplishment, and awarded in recognition of fulfillment of the expectations that come with tenure."

The Provost is willing to entertain *limited* exceptions to this policy for faculty who are making exceptional progress, and if there is a retention issue. Exceptional progress is defined as being above and beyond the baseline strong progress that we expect to see of all faculty in the normal six year time frame.

##### **1. Issues for Chairs/Directors to consider when considering early promotion:**

- a. How early is this request?
  - i. The earlier it is, the higher the standards.
  - i. For those hired at the Associate level: did this person have tenure before coming to Cornell and how long has it been since that tenure was granted?
- b. Is there a retention issue and how pressing is it?
  - a. Can the Chair/Director document that the faculty member's research productivity is exceptional compared to other associate professors in the department/college/field, both within and outside of Cornell?
    - i. Looking at metrics such as publications (both quality and quantity), citations/impact, and grant writing or others as appropriate.
    - ii. Chairs/Directors should be very selective in making the case to the Dean for early promotion. A good rule of thumb is: if the unit only could pick one person to come up early in the next several years would this be the person?

##### **2. Procedures for early promotion requests:**

- a. The Chair/Director makes a case to the Dean, documenting as noted above that the faculty member is exceptional and/or that there is a retention issue, and that the other Professors in the unit are supportive of this request
- b. The Dean reviews the request and determines whether to make a case to the Provost
- c. The Provost reviews the case and determines whether the early promotion case can proceed