



Guidelines for department chairs in preparing dossiers recommending Tenure for External Hires to Associate or Full Professors¹ July 2020

The purpose of these guidelines is to help the candidate and department prepare the strongest possible dossier for the awarding of tenure to newly-hired associate or full professors. 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 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 include "excellence in carrying out the responsibilities of the position, and unusual promise for continued achievement".²

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 Cornell Drop Box to the Dean's assistant (Cindy Thompson) by:

- 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 Cornell Drop Box, it is reviewed to be sure all relevant sections have been submitted. An ad hoc committee is selected 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

¹ 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 Guidelines](#)

² [Faculty Handbook](#)

recommendation to the Provost from the Dean and Senior Associate Dean. The Provost will then determine whether to seek the advice of the Faculty Advisory Committee on Tenure Appointments (FACTA). The Provost will then convey the dossier to the Cornell University Board of Trustees. This process necessitates a long time-frame.

Approval of the award of 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:

[Appealing a negative decision](#)

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 tenure. This letter should reflect the results of two votes (if relevant) 1) a vote on tenure by the tenured faculty, and 2) a vote on the rank of Full Professor, by the Full Professors (if relevant). The letter should include the date of the meeting and votes, giving reasons for any objections, reservations, or abstentions. The votes 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" section below, not here.

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. If the faculty member participated in both votes (regarding both tenure and Full Professor status), one letter can be used to explain both of these votes. If the department uses a departmental review committee, its report should be included in this section. Faculty Letters 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.³
- c. **Evaluators Suggested by the Candidate.** The department should also solicit letters from evaluators suggested by the candidate and submit 4 to 6 letters in the dossier. These 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. **CVs of Evaluators Selected by the department**
- e. **CVs of Evaluators suggested by the 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

³ [HR Guidelines](#)

includes information on external funding (a separate section on external funding can also be included if preferred). Include Google Scholar. 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 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.

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.⁴

C. Appendix:

1. Publications.

The candidate must submit representative publications (in electronic form) showcasing his or her highest quality work.

2. Position Description.

Please include a copy of the original letter of appointment with salary information redacted, 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.

⁴ [HR Guidelines for newly hired](#)