



2024 – 2025 Tenure-Track Faculty Promotion & Tenure Guidelines

I. INTRODUCTION

A.) General

1. “The promotion and tenure policies of the University should contribute to academic excellence. An equitable and widely-understood promotion and tenure system ensures that considerations of academic quality will be the basis for academic personnel decisions.” ([University policy AC23, Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations.](#)) A goal of any university and its academic substructures is to attract to the faculty capable and highly qualified individuals whose expertise in the pursuit of their scholarly and research aspirations will assure such excellence, and to retain those whose scholarly and professional contributions merit promotion and tenure. If such a system is to work, viable and strong tenure and promotion policies must be established fairly and effectively in accomplishing these goals.
2. These policies and procedures are intended to localize *University Policy AC23, Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations* and the concomitant Guidelines for AC23. The latest versions of this University Policy and Administrative Guidelines can be found on the [VPFA Promotion and Tenure webpage](#). These policies and procedures make University Policy applicable in light of the mission of the College of Health and Human Development and its academic units; they in no way alter or supersede applicable University policy.
3. Timing of review for pre-tenure faculty in the College of Health and Human Development must strictly follow University policy and guidelines.
4. The responsibility for putting faculty forward for post-tenure promotion review lies with the Unit Head.
5. The Unit Head can put a faculty member forward for post-tenure promotion review in any year they feel a faculty member is ready for such review.
6. Understanding the expectations needed for promotion from associate to full professor and developing a trajectory toward promotion should be topics of regular informal discussion between faculty members and Unit Heads. Readiness for promotion review can be raised as a topic when either party feels the time is appropriate.
7. For associate professors, the extended five-year post-tenure review as described in AC40 will also include a thorough assessment of readiness for promotion review. As part of this assessment the Unit Head may:
 - request supporting documentation (consistent with materials that would become part of the dossier) from the faculty member and
 - confidentially, informally, and formatively consult with Deans, Chairs of P&T Committees, and members of P&T Committees.

8. The Department Head will communicate their recommendation on readiness for promotion review to an associate professor after the five-year post tenure review.

- If the Unit Head recommends that the faculty member move forward for review, and the faculty member concurs, the review will proceed.

- If the Unit Head recommends that the faculty member not move forward for review, the communication from the Unit Head to the faculty member will cover strategies for building toward promotion review readiness.

- In addition, if the recommendation is that the faculty member not move forward for review, the faculty member can request that the Unit Head put them forward regardless, and the Unit Head must honor that request.

9. In years other than the five-year post tenure review year, requests from an associate professor to move forward with promotion review do not need to be honored. However, as stated in #5 above, a Unit Head can still elect to put a faculty member forward for review in any year – they do not need to wait until after the subsequent five-year post-tenure review to do so.

10. For promotion to full reviews, when the department peer review committee does not recommend promotion and the department head agrees, after consulting with the dean, the head should at that point discuss with the candidate the advisability of withdrawing the dossier.

II. REVIEW PROCEDURES

A.) General

The faculty bears primary and major responsibility for the evaluation of the academic qualification of candidates for promotion and tenure. This evaluation occurs on three levels: the academic department/school (“Unit”), the College, and the University. For faculty located at campuses other than University Park, but who retain tenure at University Park, the first level of review is conducted at their campus of residence. The Unit review focuses on the quality of work in the discipline itself; the College-level review takes a broader, all-college perspective with administrative judgments included and the University review monitors general standards of quality and equity from the broadest perspective. At each of these areas, the review shall be more stringent. There shall be consultation between the appropriate Unit Head and the candidate on the results of this evaluation, with suggestions for ways in which performance can be improved. A record shall be kept of the nature and result of this review.

There are two levels of review within the College of Health and Human Development: the (academic) Unit review and the College review. At the College level, the College Promotion and Tenure Committee shall review the second-, fourth-, and sixth-year candidacies, any special out-of-sequence or off-year candidacies, and all promotion candidacies.

Particular emphasis and focus should be given at the respective review levels as follows. However, for faculty located at campuses other than University Park, but who retain tenure at University Park and seek promotion, the following evaluations shall be applied taking into consideration the mission and work assignments at their particular location.

B.) Focus at the two levels:

1. Academic Unit

- Evaluation of the scholarship of teaching and learning
- Evaluation of the scholarship of research and creative accomplishment
- Evaluation of service and the scholarship of service to the University, Society and the Profession

2. College

- College criteria
- Quality of documentation
- Equity among programs
- Procedural fairness

For candidates whose probationary period included the calendar years 2020-21, committees at both levels of review will be expected to consider dossiers within the context of the extraordinary events occurring within that time-period. More specific guidance on the committee review of calendar years 2020-21 material is available at both the University and college levels. The college encourages candidates to review the guidelines developed for committees way be found at the following web locations:

University guidance for committees: [VPFA Promotion and Tenure webpage](#)

College guidance for committees: [HHD Guidelines webpage \(under the Faculty category\)](#)

C.) College Level Review Committee

1. Purpose

a.) It is the purpose of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee to assist the Dean, Unit Heads, peer promotion and tenure committees, and faculty at large in providing maximal opportunities for each faculty member to achieve his/her professional and personal goals within the University community in relation to the objectives of the University, the College and the Unit. The committee has the dual function of helping the Dean in appraising information regarding decisions on matters of promotion in rank and progress toward tenure and to propose means by which faculty development can be individually and collectively affected and thus facilitate each faculty member in meeting their professional goals.

2. Charge

a.) Role of the Committee. The charge to the College Promotion and Tenure Committee is to review all faculty and program contexts in which a member operates primarily to assist each faculty member, but also to advise (when appropriate) the Unit Head on ways to achieve the above goals. Such an assessment may be initiated by the College Committee itself, or by the Unit Head. The intent is not only that a continuing review be maintained but also that a systematic review be conducted at the appropriate intervals. The Committee is to consider in its review such matters as faculty members' teaching, research, outreach, university and public service, and administrative loads, their aspirations and goals for their careers, and the ways in which they see their goals in relation to the goals of the Unit, the College, the campus at which they reside and the University.

b.) Independence of judgments. Although the role of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee is to be considered advisory to the Dean and to the faculty as individuals and as a group, with respect to issues related to tenure and promotion, its judgments of candidates being reviewed will be independent. It is intended, however, that the Committee be encouraged to consider and to propose means by which faculty development can be individually and collectively improved.

In addition, the committee is expected to base its judgment solely upon information contained in the candidate's dossier along with other allowable materials as outlined in AC23 and this document. The dossier represents a snap-shot in time of the candidate's *cumulative* work.

c.) Membership. The College Promotion and Tenure Committee shall consist of the following members: one member from each of the academic Units in the College and one additional member appointed by the dean. Faculty members on leave of absence, including sabbatical leave, are prohibited from membership. In situations when a faculty member is tenured in HHD but located at a campus other than University Park and being considered for promotion, the College Committee will also include one additional member selected by the dean from among the faculty who are located at campuses other than University Park, but who are tenured at University Park. When considering committee membership, units with tenured faculty at other campus locations may consider these individuals in selecting their unit's representative to the college committee. Only tenured faculty at the rank of Associate or Full Professor are eligible for membership. Upon occasion, there may be a need for overlap in committee membership at the unit and college levels. Representatives to the College Committee, who previously participated in the Unit Committee recommendation of a candidate during the same review period, must abstain from participation in the College Committee's discussion and vote of that candidate. The reason for abstention will be noted in the College Committee's evaluative statement. No Academic Administrator (Dean, Associate Dean, School Director or Department Head) who, by the nature of his/her administrative responsibility, is required to provide an independent evaluation may serve on this committee. The chair shall be appointed by the Dean from the committee membership.

If the committee does not have a requisite number of members at a given rank to conduct a review, the Dean shall appoint an additional number at the appropriate rank to serve as a subcommittee such that at least five people serve as voting members on the subcommittee.

3. Operation

a.) Amenability. The Promotion and Tenure Committee shall operate within the provisions of University policy AC23, *The Administrative Guidelines to AC23*, and this document.

b.) Confidentiality. The Committee shall conduct its activities in a way that guarantees an individual's right to privacy not only during the committee's deliberations but forever thereafter. Committee members should not retain any personal notes about promotion and tenure cases once the work of the committee has concluded.

c.) Voting restrictions. Only faculty of higher rank than the candidate may vote upon recommendations in regard to promotion. If a member declares a conflict of interest they must recuse themselves from the vote. Members who are not eligible to vote shall not be present for the discussion of the case nor for the vote itself.

d.) Rating. Review committee must make judgement of the candidate's three scholarship sections using the following classification: excellent, very good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory.

III. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

A.) General

1. Responsibility for preparation of dossier. A dossier that outlines the accomplishments of the candidate will be prepared each time the candidate is reviewed for promotion or tenure. The dossier preparation is the responsibility of the Unit Head; the ultimate responsibility for correct format is the Dean's. The candidate and the Unit Head will supply the basic, factual information to be included in the dossier.

2. Content of the dossier. It is expected that the candidate will assist in providing the relevant information requested in each section of the dossier. Dossiers will be organized in a prescribed format as described in full in the current *AC23 Administrative Guidelines* following the three major areas of evaluation. A substantive description of each of the three areas is presented here. Detailed criteria for each area may be found in the guidelines for each unit. It should be noted that, for faculty located at campuses other than University Park, but who retain tenure at University Park, the evaluation criteria in each of the three areas shall be applied in light of the mission and work assignments at their particular location.

3. To assist in the preparation of their dossier for promotion and tenure reviews, the following guidelines are provided for the effective use of Activity Insight. Faculty members are encouraged to update their Activity Insight profiles with comprehensive records of their academic accomplishments. Faculty should regularly review and verify the accuracy of their entries, as this will facilitate a smoother and more efficient review process. Activity Insight ensures that all relevant information is systematically organized and readily accessible for the complete dossier.

B.) The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

1. All of a candidate's professional responsibilities in the scholarship of teaching and learning (including resident and online instruction, independent study, membership on and leadership of undergraduate and graduate thesis and dissertation committees, academic and career advising with students, course and curriculum development, design and delivery of co-curricular activities, and other activities related to these responsibilities) will be considered by department and college committees, unit head, and the Dean to evaluate the candidate within the context of the candidate's workload assignment. Although some level of engagement in undergraduate teaching and learning is expected of all candidates, there is no expected or ideal ratio of undergraduate to graduate level teaching engagement, and this ratio will vary based on department needs and candidate's expertise.

2. Evaluation shall focus on the most recent 5 years, unless the faculty member was reviewed more recently, in which case reviews should include information from the time of the prior review forward.

3. Evaluation shall rely upon systematic, theoretically sound and impartial evidence gathered from student and peer observations of classroom instruction as well as alternative assessments completed in accordance with department guidelines for the professional development and guidance of its faculty. Information to be considered with respect to this portion of the scholarship shall include:

a.) Effective fall 2023, the Student Educational Experience Questionnaire (SEEQ) will be utilized to gather student feedback rather than the SRTE. Effective spring 2024, mid-semester SEEQs will be administered through the Schryer Institute for Teaching Excellence (SITE). Because feedback is formative, results will not be shared with administrators. Candidates will not be permitted to include information about their mid-semester feedback in their dossiers or supplemental materials. If the candidate wishes to discuss mid-semester feedback in their narrative, they can contact a SITE consultant.

b.) At least one form of information gathered from peers (e.g., observation of classroom instruction, feedback on class materials for online or resident education). It is recommended that peer observation and feedback be conducted at least annually for each faculty member during the provisional period and regularly after that period. **The provision period in this case is recommended to be two peer reviews in the first four academic years, two more in the next two academic years prior to submitting the dossier for 6th year review, and on review every two academic years once tenured.** Note that peer teaching observations were suspended in Spring 2020 and Summer 2020. The omission of a peer teaching observation for either of these two terms therefore does not provide evidence relevant to the assessment of teaching effectiveness.

i.) In arranging peer observation and feedback, **best practices** that units may consider include: observing and providing feedback on a variety of courses, using multiple faculty members to provide a breadth of information, and having at least one course observed multiple times, to provide information on faculty response to peer and student feedback. Peer observation and feedback may consider a range of teaching activities, including, but not limited to the development of course materials, advising, and student research collaboration and mentoring. The method of peer observation and feedback shall be determined by faculty in the unit and applied consistently. When used, all documentation associated with peer observation and feedback, not a summary created by an administrator, shall be included in the evaluation materials. Unless determined otherwise in the unit guidelines, peer observation and feedback are arranged by the unit head who can ask that they be conducted by any faculty member in the unit. Peer observation and feedback are intended to be a developmental opportunity for faculty, who can use the information to improve their teaching. Thus, they must be accessible in a timely manner to the faculty member being observed. Department and college committees, unit head and the Dean consider this information from observations, as well as any documented response of the candidate to these observations, to evaluate performance.

c.) At least one additional form of information gathered from students (e.g., summary of student comments from **SEEQs**, summary of formal end-of-semester or exit surveys). A summary of comments from open-ended items can be used to meet this requirement. However, a summary of **SEEQ** comments does not meet criteria for alternative assessment (see Section 4 below). If a summary of student comments from **SEEQs** are used, departments may present the evidence in narrative or tabular format. The information may be organized by relevant categories and subcategories (e.g., strengths and weaknesses; organization, engagement, and feedback) and shall include an indication of the number of comments for each category/subcategory. A consistent approach shall be used for all faculty. The candidate must not be involved in preparing the summary of comments.

Other forms of student feedback can simultaneously meet criteria here and also meet criteria for alternative assessments (see Section 4 below).

4. Effective July 1, 2023, candidates are not required to include an alternate assessment in their dossier. Alternate assessments included in the dossier for previous formal reviews are to be retained as they may be referred to in previous recommendation letters. Moving forward, faculty at Penn State will be required to submit a self-reflection as part of their annual review.

5. Information used in the review may also include systematic evidence gathered from alumni and former students, professional organizations or other sources as determined by local academic unit guidelines.

6. In addition, the candidate may submit a teaching portfolio. A teaching portfolio is not included in the dossier for promotion and/or tenure, but is included in supplementary material, just as are copies of

publications. The portfolio is retained by the unit head, but is available at all levels of review upon request. A teaching portfolio may include a narrative description of the teaching assignments, a statement of teaching philosophy, evidence of class materials (syllabus, assignments, etc.), examples of feedback provided to students, course or curriculum proposals developed, applications for funding of teaching scholarship, description of efforts to improve teaching, examples of teaching innovations implemented, and other similar items that demonstrate the candidate's scholarship of teaching and learning.

C.) The Scholarship of Research and Creative Accomplishments

1. Research. The demonstration of the scholarship of research and creative accomplishment involves both qualitative and quantitative components. Research competence is thus not reflected in a single product per se, but rather by the programmatic character of one's research, by the appearance of one's work in the leading peer-reviewed professional outlets in one's discipline, by success in attaining external funding for one's research program, and by the clear identification by others in one's discipline of one's expertise in and contribution to a specific area of scholarly endeavor. Of these, the feasibility of success in attaining external funding will vary as a function of discipline, variation that should be taken into account by reviewers. In summary, attaining a visible and programmatic record of research involves a high level of productivity; in addition, however, the recognition that such a program should earn in order for it to be regarded as reflective of research competence is a qualitative feature of the research.

2. Scholarship. Evidence of scholarship should be assessed through a record of invited papers, and invitations to speak at scholarly seminars and assemblies both on and off campus, all of which establish a reputation of quality in one's profession. Publication of popular works, book reviews, and non-peer reviewed papers, and development of new or revised teaching materials all serve to enhance the professing of information. Election to scholarly academies demonstrates mastery. Participation in scholarly academies demonstrates the confidence of peers and colleagues in one's acknowledged expertise and leadership (i.e., editor, reviewer, etc.). Leadership in bringing workshops, clinics, and educational opportunities to wider audiences is further evidence of mastery in a specified area of scholarship bridging research and application.

3. 2020-2021 AY. Finally, it should be noted that presentations of research and scholarship may have been arranged but not delivered during 2020 and 2021. These can be noted throughout the dossier as "accepted/invited" (choose one) but unable to be presented because of COVID-19."

D.) Service and the Scholarship of Service to the University, Society and the Profession.

1. Each faculty member is expected to take an active role in University affairs and public service. Participation in committee work, faculty governance, administrative support, and a wide scope of University, College, and Unit affairs provides evidence of service within the University. Commitment to public service through involvement in community affairs, governmental, industrial, public, and private organizations demonstrates competence in extending the University's specialized knowledge throughout the Commonwealth, nation, and beyond. Active contribution to professional organizations is also considered a commitment to service.

E.) External Letters of Assessment

1. Solicitation. External letters of assessment shall be solicited only by the Office of the Dean and are included in the candidate's dossier. General procedures for securing these letters are outlined in the *AC23 Administrative Guidelines*.

2. Identification of reviewers. Specific to the College of Health and Human Development, the following guidelines apply.

a.) The Dean will receive from the academic unit head a list of eleven unique potential evaluator names, five (5) names provided by the candidate, three (3) by the academic unit review committee, and three (3) by the academic unit head as well as a back-up list of six unique potential evaluator names with three (3) additional by the academic unit review committee and three (3) additional by the academic unit head. The list will be provided in alphabetical order; will indicate whether each name was provided by the candidate, committee, or head; and will include a one-paragraph rationale (that includes a summary of the individual's relevant academic credentials) as to why that individual would be an appropriate reviewer. The Dean will choose six (6) names from this list to start the solicitation process.

b.) External reviewers must be senior to the person being reviewed. Thus, candidates for promotion to associate professor must be reviewed by people at the rank of associate or full professor whereas candidates for promotion to full professor must be reviewed by full professors. Where applicable, reviewers may be drawn from research-related institutions outside the academy that are relevant to the candidate's field as long as they are seasoned, highly regarded researchers.

c.) Relatives, former teachers, colleagues or students of the candidate and anyone else who is not in a position to provide a fair and impartial assessment (such as co-workers, co-authors/investigators, and friends) should be avoided as referees.

d.) In general, references should be senior faculty from research universities similar to Penn State.

3. External evaluation letters. A minimum of four external evaluation letters are needed per candidate. It is preferred that of the minimum four external review letters received, one (1) reviewer should be from the list provided by the academic unit review committee, one (1) reviewer should be from the list provided by the academic unit head, and the remaining two (2) reviewers can be from the list provided by the candidate.

4. Materials sent to external reviewers. Faculty members will provide an updated curriculum vitae (CV) and five sample publications of research and/or scholarly work that illustrates their program of research. They will also provide a research statement (up to one-and-one half pages in length) summarizing their program of research. This research statement may be the same as the research portion of the candidate's narrative statement that will be part of the tenure and promotion dossier OR it may be a document that is tailored to the audience of potential reviewers.

For candidates whose probationary period included calendar years 2020-21, consistent with University guidelines on the dossier narrative, the candidate can elect to explicitly describe the impact of the COVID pandemic on their research program in this research statement following University guidelines (found on the VPFA Promotion and Tenure webpage). The research statement and CV sent to the external reviewers will be included later in the supplemental materials, not in the dossier itself.

F.) Processing and Maintenance of Records

1. Accessibility to file. Other than to appropriate committees and administrators, the dossier is not accessible to anyone except to the faculty member him/herself, subject to the restrictions cited in the *AC23 Administrative Guidelines*, and HR60, *Access to Personnel Files*.
2. Privacy rights. Throughout the process, the privacy rights of individual candidates shall be respected.
3. Supplemental materials. When the dossier is forwarded to the next review level, supplemental materials (teaching portfolio, syllabi if a teaching portfolio with syllabi is not provided, books, copies of articles, reprints, materials sent to external reviewers, etc.) supporting the candidacy shall be retained by the Unit Head. This supporting material will be available for review by committees as well as the Dean.
4. Identification of special circumstances. Unit peer committee and Unit Head letters of evaluation should explicitly clarify any exceptions to the norm, special factors, or contradictory information in the dossier.
5. Joint appointments. For faculty who are also budgeted in a unit beyond their tenure home (e.g., academic unit outside the College, a College center or University institute), the Head (or Director or Dean, if there are no departments [e.g., College of Nursing]) of the “secondary” unit shall be responsible for providing a written letter of evaluation which will be made a part of the dossier section, “Statements of Evaluation of the Candidate by Review Committees and Administrators.” The letter, solicited by the Head of the primary unit, will be considered by the Unit peer committee and the Unit Head along with all other applicable levels of review. The Head of the primary department should consult with the Head (or Director or Dean, if applicable) of the secondary unit when there is disagreement about the decision. The Dean of the primary college must consult with the Dean of any secondary college when applicable before writing their letter. The primary Dean should also copy any secondary Dean on all communications.

For faculty who are not budgeted but provide service in a unit beyond their tenure home, a letter may be provided and will be included in the appropriate criteria section of the dossier and not in the administrative section.

6. Distribution of evaluative statements. Unit Heads shall receive copies of the written statements of evaluation and recommendations made at subsequent levels.

IV. Feedback to the Candidate and Academic Administrators

A.) After sixth-year, early tenure, tenure or promotion only reviews:

1. Successful candidates will receive the President’s decision letter in early May. Unit Heads will receive copies of the College Committee report and the Dean’s and President’s letters. University policy does not oblige unit Heads to meet with the faculty members nor should they automatically share the reports with the candidates. However, the college strongly encourages Unit Heads to meet with successful candidates and, as noted in C below, in accordance with HR60, candidates may request to review all aspects of their life (except for external reviewers), including these reports.

2. The Dean has responsibility for informing, in writing, no later than March 1, those candidates who did not receive a positive tenure and/or promotion recommendation at the college level. Unit Heads will receive copies of the College Committee report and Dean's letters. University policy does not oblige Unit Heads to meet with the faculty member and review all of the reports, nor should they automatically share the reports with the candidates. However, the college strongly encourages Unit Heads to meet with unsuccessful candidates and, as noted in C below. In accordance with HR60, candidates may request to review all aspects of the file (except for external reviews), including these reports.

B.) After second-year, fourth-year, and any off-cycle reviews

1. A letter from the Dean to the candidate serves as the Dean's report and will complete the review process. The Dean's letter provides a summary of conclusions from the dean's review and informs the candidate whether or not they will be continued on the tenure track. Unit Heads will receive copies of the College Committee report and Dean's letter. The Unit Head is obligated to discuss the results of these formal reviews with the faculty member. These sessions are to be held as soon as possible after the review process is completed and before the end of the academic year. The candidate is to be given copies of all evaluative internal reports and letters (Unit Committee, Unit Head, College Committee and Dean).

C.) Upon completion of the entire review process

1. The dossier, except for the documents in the external assessment section, may be reviewed and inspected by the candidate, regardless of review level, in accordance with HR-60, "Access to Personnel Files."

College guidance for faculty: [Post-Cycle Request for Faculty to View Promotion & Tenure Review Letters](#)