

University of Florida
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

*Tenure and Promotion Guidelines for Department Chairs for
the award of tenure & promotion to Associate Professor & Professor*

TEACHING - There should be evidence of a sustained commitment to excellence in teaching by the candidate as reflected in student teaching evaluations, faculty/departmental evaluations, and instructional materials.

RESEARCH - For the promotion to associate professor/tenure, there should be evidence of a body of work of sufficient quality and quantity that has produced at least the beginning of a national reputation for significant and creative contributions to the candidate's field of research, and there should be evidence of the promise of continued growth. For promotion to professor, an established national and/or international reputation is expected, as well as the indication of sustained high quality work.

The expectations vary by discipline, but currently and in general candidates for promotion to associate professor/tenure in the humanities are normally expected to have a book-length scholarly manuscript completed and accepted for publication by a press recognized in the field. Candidates for promotion to professor in the humanities are normally expected to have two scholarly books in published form available for departmental/college review. The expectations in some fields may, however, be closer to those in natural and social science disciplines. The natural and laboratory sciences are focused primarily on a substantial record of refereed articles in visible journals and securing external research funding. The expectations in mathematical and social/behavioral sciences are also primarily for refereed articles in visible general and specialty journals, with less emphasis on external funding and with substantial appreciation for book-driven scholarly records in the social sciences.

SERVICE - For promotion to associate professor/tenure, there should be evidence of a positive contribution to the life of the department, college, and/or university. For promotion to full professor, a candidate is expected to make a positive contribution to the university and to the profession. A candidate's service record may also include service to the state and the nation.

These three areas of activity should conform to the annual assignment of duties, and the tenure and promotion evaluation should be a reflection of these annual assignments.

The following guidelines are intended to facilitate the tenure and promotion process, to insure that certain important items are included, and to assist you in preparing the strongest case(s) for your candidate(s). Many of these suggestions come from CLAS Tenure and Promotion Committee members who, during the course of their three-year terms, review a total of approximately 150 dossiers which exhibit a wide variation in quality.

1) Outside Letters

a. The minimum number of outside letters is three. Most departments submit more than this, and in some instances that number is very large. It is suggested that you submit no more than six letters from carefully

selected distinguished scholars. In choosing these individuals it is recommended that the chair ask the candidate for suggestions and that no more than half of the solicitations come from her/his list. The remainder should be individuals selected by the department; i. e., by the chair and knowledgeable colleagues. Furthermore, while it is acceptable (and understandable) that one or two of these letters might come from the candidate's senior colleagues (i. e., doctoral mentors, research collaborators, etc.), the vast majority should be from more disinterested parties. All such letters received shall become part of the dossier.

b. In requesting the letters of recommendation (the request must come from the chair or another authorized senior member of the department faculty), the respondent should be asked to assess the quality of the candidate's publication and research record, her/his standing in the field, her/his teaching and service performance (if known), and the appropriateness of tenure and/or promotion. You should also advise each respondent as to whether or not the candidate has waived her/his right of access to the letters of recommendation. Please keep in mind that should a candidate pursue a grievance or legal action over tenure, the letters of recommendation may be revealed to the candidate, even when he/she has waived access.

c. Since the Tenure and Promotion Committee will not generally be acquainted with any of the outside referees, you, the chair, are asked to provide a thumbnail sketch of the reviewers on a separate sheet of paper placed at the front of the recommendation letters, so that Committee members are aware of who they are and the authority with which they speak. In your thumbnail sketch, please state who selected each referee (i.e. the candidate or the department) and whether there is a special relationship between the candidate and the referees.

d. Please include a sample copy of the departmental letter requesting the recommendation letters.

2) Internal letters of recommendation

There should be at least three, and it is recommended that there be no more than four, excluding your own letter. These letters should come from colleagues who can comment intelligently on a candidate's research, teaching, and service. Since the outside referees are unlikely to have much knowledge of the candidate's teaching and service activities on campus, these should be addressed in particular by local reviewers. The University is now insisting that we also have a thumbnail sketch of each of the internal referees.

3) Chair's letter

This letter should carefully review the candidate's various activities and the uniqueness of his/her record. Without being effusive or verbose, it should assess frankly the candidate's work in all three areas and should indicate how it contributes to and enhances the mission of the department and the University. This letter also ought to indicate the impact the granting of tenure for this faculty member will have on the department's future.

4) Duty assignments and evaluations

On the tenure/promotion forms, under "Assigned Activity," you are asked to indicate the candidate's assignment percentages and performance level. These numbers must coincide with the candidate's Semester Faculty Assignment Report which the chair signed in previous years.

Likewise, the evaluations of performance inserted in these reports must reflect the evaluations received by the candidate in her/his annual evaluations

5) Teaching evaluations

This material should accurately represent the work of the candidate over a period of several years and should include all UF evaluations for the past five years. Please make sure that the proper department and College averages for the terms reported are inserted correctly.

Departments are expected to submit with their promotion/tenure materials a teaching evaluation for each candidate, as conducted by an appropriate departmental committee or review team. Part of this evaluation must now include classroom visitation by a peer review committee (or a member of such committee). The teaching appraisal may also include a review of syllabi, examinations, and other instructional materials. Please note that individual cases may be delayed this year if a peer assessment report of teaching is not included in the faculty member's packet.

6) Publications

a. To assist the Committee in the evaluation process, please list (either in your cover letter or elsewhere) the major journals in the candidate's discipline. If a large portion of a candidate's publications appear elsewhere, please explain. If the candidate is one of several joint authors, please give us some indication of the person's ranking in the group and underline the name of the senior author. In the case of books (monographs), please comment on their significance. Include reviews if possible; if a newly-published book has not yet been reviewed in the journals, it is advisable to include manuscript reviews from major scholars in the specialty. If the candidate has edited books or articles which are listed as publications, comment on their significance. If you can supply information on the rejection rate of the journals, please do so.

b. Publications that are in press must have their status verified by the inclusion of copies of letters from editors indicating acceptance. Materials that are "in preparation," "under review," etc. are not yet publications.

7) Grants and contracts

These should be listed by funding source, amounts, and start/stop dates. It is important to have information concerning the individual's status in jointly held contracts and grants. Was the candidate a principal investigator? If not, where did s/he rank among the co-investigators?

8) Statement by candidate

The tenure/promotion file may include a statement by the candidate included under packet item 32 in which s/he adds any other information considered important that elaborates, adds to, or specifies further teaching accomplishments (packet item 8) and research narrative (packet item 12) and plans for the future along with any other information on service and other activities.

9) Peer review of candidate

The tenure/promotion file should also include an assessment of the scholarly progress of the candidate. The chair may elect to do this alone, but a small fact-finding committee may assess the candidate's progress and scholarly reputation to date and consult with the chair.

10) Departmental criteria for T&P

Departments are asked to have on file in the College Office a statement of the guidelines or standards for tenure and promotion. These criteria are useful to the T&P Committee as it seeks to make an impartial and informed decision in each case. Questions, for example, may arise about expectations of departments in research, teaching, and service.

11) Recommendation of tenure at appointment

The award of tenure may be recommended to the Board of Trustees at the time of initial appointment to associate professor or above. Requests for tenure upon appointment should be submitted to the Provost (or designee) with a statement of the reasons for the request and supporting documentation, including but not limited to, a copy of the nominee's resume, the letters of recommendation, and the vote of the appropriate departmental faculty. A department should obtain a formal vote from the faculty at the same time that it votes to extend an offer and prior to seeking the approval of the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The statement shall set forth the special circumstances which warrant granting tenure as a condition of employment, including a brief summary of the nominee's academic credentials and employment. After the chair recommends the appointment with tenure to the College Office, the Dean may seek the advice of the College Tenure and Promotion Committee, so that he may benefit from the expertise of its members. All materials submitted on behalf of the candidate will be shared with the CLAS T&P Committee.

12) "Early" consideration of a case

Assistant professors may be reviewed for tenure and promotion in any year of tenure accrual, but are considered to be "early" cases if, at the time of the formal review, they are not yet in the sixth year in a tenure-accruing position at the University of Florida. In such cases the department must provide a clear statement addressing why the early review is warranted, for example, on the basis of the candidate's positions prior to employment at UF and/or the candidate's excellence in research, teaching, and service. There is no defined time period for when candidates who have been promoted to the rank of associate professor at UF should be given formal review for promotion to full professor, but customarily the issue of early consideration is raised if the candidate has been in rank fewer than six years. Again, chairs should be provide a clear rationale for their support for the case.

13) Withdrawal from the Process

Candidates have the right to withdraw without prejudice from the tenure and/or promotion process prior to the President's decision. In the event that a candidate for tenure and/or promotion elects to withdraw from the process before the nomination packet is complete, no further materials should be added to the file. Internal and external evaluators who have not yet responded should be notified immediately that their letters will not be required and that any letter en route will be returned. The candidate shall have access to the file as it exists at the point of withdrawal. Candidates who have not waived their right to see letters of evaluation may read any letters that have already been placed in the nomination packet.

14) Complying with Open Records Law--Department Level

All reviews at every level, whether positive or negative, flow forward to the President.

a. The department may elect or the chair may appoint a committee comprised of eligible faculty members of the department, which will serve in a fact-finding and consultative role, reviewing the candidate's record and reporting on the strengths and weaknesses of that record.

Clarification: Fact-finding and consultation involve more than counting numbers of articles, books, conference papers, grants etc. The faculty on a committee may reach judgments through informed fact-finding. That is, those with expertise may assist the ultimate decision-maker with determining the significance of journals in which work is placed, the significance and importance of the work itself, the relative achievement and place of the scholar in a national or international context, etc.

Examples of statements:

Borderline: "This is excellent scholarship, on a par with that of the best emerging scholars in the field and would meet departmental criteria for tenure and/or promotion (or would exceed departmental criteria for tenure and/or promotion).

Better: "This is excellent scholarship, on a par with that of the best emerging scholars in the field."

b. The eligible faculty members of the academic department in which the faculty member shall be promoted and/or shall hold tenure status if it is awarded shall review the packet and may meet to discuss the nomination. A secret ballot of the eligible faculty members in the department shall be taken no earlier than one day following the meeting.

15) Complying with Open Records Law--College Level

In conducting the review, the dean shall consult with a fact-finding committee comprised of eligible faculty members of the college. A list of the members of the committee shall be available at the college office.

[University Tenure, Permanent Status and Promotion Nominations, 2002-2003](#)

(Memo from David Colburn, May 3, 2002)