

# Promotion and/or Tenure Guidance

## #8: Departmental Review and Recommendation



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*Throughout this document, reference is made to the department, the Department Committee, and the Department Head. It is understood that specific details will vary for those academic units that do not have a departmental configuration, including the Schools of Law, Journalism & Communication, and Music. Please adapt the guidance provided here for your circumstances, in accord with your established promotion and tenure criteria document.*

The internal review of a promotion and/or tenure file begins after a complete set of external evaluations has been obtained. This guidance document addresses department-level reviews, recommendations, and reports, as well as final preparation and submission of the dossier for the next stages of review.

Please note that departmental shared governance policies establish eligibility to review and/or vote on cases involving promotion and/or tenure. These governance documents are currently in the process of review, revision, and approval. If your department's governance policy has been approved, carry out the department-level review in accord with that policy. If your governance policy has not yet been approved, carry out the review in accord with current practice in your department. Only tenured faculty are allowed to vote on tenure cases. Further, unless there are extenuating circumstances and approval for an exception has been granted by the Provost or designee, only those tenured faculty at or above the rank being sought are allowed to vote – *i.e.*, only tenured associate and full professors vote on the granting of tenure and/or promotion from assistant to associate professor, and only tenured full professors vote on promotions to full professor. Other details, including who is allowed to review a promotion and/or tenure file and voting rights for faculty on leave, are or will be established by departmental governance documents.

### ***Department Committee Review and Recommendation***

Most but not all departments constitute personnel or promotion committees to carry out the initial review of the dossier. (Some departments simply define *all* eligible faculty in the department as the committee responsible for the initial review.) Your departmental shared governance policy will clearly establish whether or not such a committee is to be convened. If such a committee is used, it should of course include only faculty eligible to vote on the case. If there are too few eligible faculty members to form a review committee within the candidate's department, the Department Head should consult with the Dean to establish a committee, drawing appropriate faculty members from outside the department. While there is no requirement to consult with the candidate regarding the selection of members for such a committee, it is reasonable to do so in order to avoid any potential concerns about the appropriateness of the committee.

The Department Committee should review, evaluate, and critically discuss the full file, including the external evaluations and the materials contained in the supplementary file. Following this discussion, the

committee should conduct a vote by signed ballot. The signed ballots should be retained in a safe and confidential place; only the final vote tally is to be revealed in the committee's report.

- The report from the Department Committee should provide an analysis of the case that goes beyond what may be gleaned from the candidate's curriculum vitae. Since this is the first of several stages of internal review, it is important that the committee present all aspects of the case fully. The review should be one of analysis, not advocacy, and it should present a critical evaluation of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses relative to the standards of the department and discipline.
  - Any discrepancies or contradictory opinions within the external reviewers' letters should be addressed in a forthright fashion. Simply ignoring negative remarks does not advantage the candidate, nor does the rejection of comments from an "outlier" reviewer simply because they are not consistent with other comments received. In the absence of meaningful engagement with such comments in the report, subsequent review committees may be left wondering if the "outlier" was in fact the only reviewer who was able to identify a real and critical issue in the case – whether in support of or arguing against the awarding of tenure and/or promotion.
  - Commentary on the journals or publishers used by the candidate will greatly assist in the evaluation. Indicate the ranking of the journals, which articles are refereed and which not, and other information relevant to appraising the candidate's published works. If citation indices (*e.g.*, the h-index) are considered relevant in your discipline, comment on these factors. Provide analogous evaluations of artistic or other creative efforts that are not in published form.
  - Comments on the stature and unique perspectives of the external reviewers can be helpful.
  - If the candidate is in a field in which research grants, fellowships, *etc.*, are normally awarded, comment on those aspects of the candidate's record. The issue is not so much size or number of awards, but rather success under rigorous competitive review. Explain any unusual circumstances – either positive or negative – in this area as well as in the overall scholarship record.
- The Department Committee plays a significant role in the analysis of the candidate's record of teaching. It is important for the committee to evaluate carefully all evidence related to teaching.
  - The committee should feel empowered to interpret and present quantitative student evaluation data in meaningful ways and should use this information to make appropriate comparisons of the candidate with the rest of the department and/or to faculty teaching courses of similar size, character or content.
  - The committee should read all signed written comments submitted by students and provide an evaluative summary of these written statements. *It is **not** permissible to quote from unsigned evaluations in any summary or evaluation statements associated with the review.*
  - The committee should also review and comment on all materials submitted by the candidate documenting his or her teaching activities (*i.e.*, the Teaching Portfolio).
  - The committee should discuss any discrepancies between student and peer evaluations.

- The report should include an appropriate discussion of the candidate’s record of service, as summarized in the candidate’s CV and statement and exemplified in the service portfolio.
- The report should include commentary on the candidate’s discussion of contributions to equity and inclusion and any evidence of these contributions provided by the candidate.

The Department Committee report must be signed by all members of the committee, and it must be dated.

### ***Department Review and Recommendation***

If a Department Committee carried out the initial review, that committee’s report should be reviewed and voted on by all eligible faculty within the department. It is not expected that this review will be accompanied by a separate report, but the Department Head’s report (discussed below) should include a summary of any meetings of the eligible faculty held to discuss the case. As for the Department Committee vote, the vote by all eligible faculty must be by signed ballot, and the signed ballots should be retained in a safe and confidential place, with only the final vote tally revealed in the Department Head’s report.

### ***Multiple or Joint Appointments***

If the candidate holds multiple or joint appointments, a memorandum should be on file, dating from the time of hire or negotiation of the additional appointment(s), specifying expectations for promotion and/or tenure review and clearly identifying how the review process will be handled among the units. Shared governance policies should also address such issues, particularly for candidates holding positions within both a department and a center or institute. Typically, recommendations are made by relevant units to the “home” department of the candidate, often in the form of a report and vote tally from the eligible members of the second department, center, or institute.

### ***Department Head Review and Recommendation***

The Department Head, who bears primary responsibility for requesting and accumulating outside letters of evaluation and for identifying the relationship of all referees to the candidate, must prepare an independent report and recommendation. This report should consist of two parts: (1) an administrative summary of the department’s handling of and position on the case, and (2) the Head’s independent evaluation of the case.

- *Administrative Summary.* If the Department Committee report does not do so, the Department Head, should provide a brief explanation of the department’s review process and any special processes or considerations involved with the review. This summary should clarify any special conditions of the appointment or special duties and obligations for which the candidate’s performance is to be particularly evaluated. It should include an explanation of who in the department was eligible to vote on the particular candidate (consistent with the department’s shared governance policy), and it must include a summary of any formal faculty discussion preceding the official vote. Votes at the department level on tenure cases must be by signed and secret ballot, with only the tally revealed

to the voting faculty and recorded on the Voting Summary. The Department Head should provide an explanation for any abstentions and/or reasons why some faculty may not have participated in the review and voting process (*e.g.*, spouse, sabbatical leave, *etc.*).

- *Department Head's Evaluation.* The Department Head should include his or her independent evaluation and recommendation including analyses of scholarship, teaching, service, and contributions to institutional equity and inclusion. This review should be independent from that of the Department Committee, and the Department Head's recommendation need not coincide with either the Department Committee or the vote of the eligible members of the department. The Department Head should objectively and honestly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate. As discussed for the Department Committee, the Department Head's review should be one of analysis, not advocacy, and each letter of evaluation should be analyzed and placed in proper perspective. (As noted above, a candidate is not well-served when negative statements are ignored or comments from an "outlier" reviewer are rejected simply because they are not consistent with other comments received.)

It is neither necessary nor desirable to duplicate material presented by the Department Committee. Internal review committees will appreciate *additional* insights provided by the Department Head that help them to interpret the file, particularly in cases of conflicting opinions among the external reviewers and/or department faculty. It is the responsibility of the Department Head to independently analyze any such diverging opinions and to indicate the reasoning that led to his or her conclusions as to the merits of the case.

The Department Head's report should also address any matters not adequately addressed by the Department Committee report. Such matters could include the following.

- Rankings or prestige of journals or venues
- Co-authorship and the significance of author order in the candidate's publications
- Stature and unique perspectives of the external reviewers
- Internal and external grant/fellowship/award record
- Additional observations about the teaching and service records

In cases where a substantial portion of the candidate's scholarship has its roots in a dissertation, the Department Head should discuss the relationship of the work published during the candidate's UO career to the dissertation. It is especially helpful to know the degree to which *new* research has been incorporated with previous work.

The report from the Department Head must be signed and dated.

### ***Voting Summary***

The outcome of the departmental vote should be entered on the Voting Summary sheet and included in the dossier, with any explanatory notes included.

### *Forwarding the Dossier to the School/College*

Carefully review the complete dossier and all supplementary files to ensure all required documents are provided and in the correct locations. Rigorous attention to detail throughout this process will significantly reduce the likelihood of any need for further adjustments of the dossier. Requests to provide additional information or clarifications to the file after it leaves the department often contribute significant stress and anxiety to an already emotionally-charged process. Please do your best to ensure that the dossier is complete and compliant before sending it forward.

Guidance document #9 will address handling of the dossier at the School/College level.