

College of Arts and Letters Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Guidelines

The personnel review process begins no later than the end of Spring semester of the academic year preceding the formal review. The unit administrator, "Chairperson," but henceforth, in this document, "Chair" informs the candidate for personnel action that the process will take place during the following academic year. The Chair reviews the promotion and tenure criteria and the review process with the candidate, and begins the preparation of the dossier.

A key element in the tenure and promotion review process (and an optional element in cases of reappointments) is peer review by means of external referee letters. The College of Arts and Letters complies with the October 25, 2011 Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Toolkit, which specifies, "a minimum of 4 external letters are solicited. External referees must be professionally capable to evaluate the candidate's scholarly work objectively and to comment on its significance in the discipline" (9).

Prior to the solicitation of letters from the referees, each candidate can provide a short list to the Chair that includes potential referees who should not be contacted because of conflicts of interest that would preclude a fair and unbiased professional review of the dossier materials. There is an expectation that this list will be limited and not exceed three individuals. Half of the external referee letters will be requested from prominent scholars or artists in the relevant field based on a list developed by the candidate. The other half of the referee letters will be requested from prominent scholars or artists on a list developed by the Chair. Letters should be solicited from the external referees no later than July 1 of the summer preceding the fall semester review; contacts with external referees are preferably made before the end of the spring semester preceding the review year.

The Chair will assure that each candidate has at least four external review letters; all review letters solicited by the Chair that are received will be included in the dossier. No unsolicited letters will be included in any part of the dossier, nor will review committees or administrators read them. To the extent defensible under Michigan law, the identity of external referees is not revealed to the candidates being reviewed, and only faculty members of duly constituted review committees and relevant administrators will read the referee letters. External reviews should be solicited by the Chair by means of a letter (or letter format) that has been approved by the Dean of the College.

As the review process begins (but no later than the end of the spring semester prior to the review year), the candidate submits to the Chair a self evaluation of 3-5 pages addressing research/creative activity, teaching, and service. The self evaluation forms an important part of the dossier; it should specifically address the candidate's accomplishments to date in light of the unit's and the University's criteria for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. At this time the candidate should also provide the Chair an up-to-date *curriculum vitae*, including complete bibliographical information on all publications and explanation of any works listed prior to publication (e.g. the exact status of any manuscript listed as "in press," "forthcoming," "under revision," etc.). These, plus sample publications if relevant, and the University and unit promotion and/or tenure criteria, are sent to the referees. Other information and materials may be sent as well, according to general unit practice.

The candidate's dossier for review at the unit level includes the self evaluation, the *curriculum vitae*, the external referee letters, sample publications and/or creative works, teaching evaluations and/or portfolios, documents supportive of quality outreach, as relevant, and any other materials required by University guidelines, the unit bylaws, or solicited by the Chair. Once the dossier is assembled, no additional material is added to it, except as indicated below or unless specifically requested by the chair, dean, or provost.

The dossier is first reviewed by the duly constituted departmental personnel review committee or committees. Committee recommendations are advisory to the Chair. Committee recommendations to the Chair should be in writing and include both the recommended personnel action and an explanation of how the committee arrived at the recommendation (i.e. a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the materials in the dossier and the case in general with respect to the criteria). All faculty members of the committee(s) should indicate, by signature, that the recommendation letter is a fair representation of the committee sentiment. If there is a minority or dissenting viewpoint, the letter(s) should so indicate. The letter(s) then become part of the candidate's dossier.

The Chair then reviews the dossier, and makes a recommendation to the Dean. If the Chair is recommending support of reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure, the Chair writes a letter to the Dean that explains reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the unit review committee(s), provides interpretative commentary about both the candidate's accomplishments and the referee letters, and explains (either in the letter, or in supplemental materials) how and why the particular referees were chosen. The dossier that is forwarded to the Dean contains the University-required Form D, all received referee letters, the candidate's self evaluation and *curriculum vitae*, the unit review committee(s) letter(s), a summary statement about the candidate's teaching evaluations and teaching accomplishments, and the unit's RPT criteria. If the Dean or the College RPT committee requires further information or materials, the Chair will be contacted.

If the Chair is not recommending in favor of the personnel action, and if the candidate is being reviewed in a mandatory review year, the dossier is forwarded to the College. If the Chair is recommending against the personnel action in an optional review year, the candidate is informed and it is the candidate's prerogative to either withdraw the dossier from further consideration or have it forwarded to the College for review.

Once a dossier is forwarded to the Office of the Dean, the Chair will notify the candidate what action was recommended by the unit committee(s) and what the Chair has recommended. The College RPT committee makes an advisory recommendation to the Dean on all major personnel actions (reappointment, promotion, and tenure) in the College. The Committee shall consist of five members holding the rank of associate professor with tenure or full professor, but the Dean, Associate or Assistant Deans, and Department chairpersons and directors shall be ineligible to serve on the Committee. Four members will be elected by the College faculty and one member appointed by the Dean. No Department shall have more than one of its members on the Committee at any given time, both Arts (AAHD and THR) and Letters (all other departments) shall be represented on the committee, and the majority of the Committee shall be composed of members holding the rank of full professor. (Please refer to the College of Arts and Letters Bylaws, Sec. 3.4)

Once a candidate's dossier has been forwarded to the Office of the Dean, the duly constituted College RPT committee begins its review. Prior to reviewing unit recommendations for reappointment and promotion, the College RPT committee reviews (1) the unit and college criteria for reappointment or promotion and (2) the university policies and procedures regarding the RPT process. The committee meets independently of the Dean and reviews each candidate's dossier with respect to the College criteria for the relevant personnel action.

In reviewing each candidate's dossier according to college criteria, the RPT committee will be mindful of the College's continuing objective to improve its faculty with each personnel recommendation. The committee will also be mindful of supporting procedural due process. Any concerns about potential breach of due process will be communicated to the Dean. A member of the committee from the candidate's home unit, or any member who is involved in collaborative work with the candidate, may participate in committee discussions about the candidate, but must recuse herself/himself from the vote. All deliberations of the committee are held in strict confidence, although questions may be directed to the Chair about individual candidates, and the Dean may be consulted if necessary. A positive recommendation for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure may ensue once it is determined that the applicable position is to be retained.

College criteria:

In the absence of specifically adopted guidelines to the contrary, the College criteria for personnel actions are drawn from the University's standards.

For reappointment, as well as for promotion and/or tenure, the candidate must provide solid evidence of consistent and persistent professional improvement and effectiveness at Michigan State University and in the College of Arts and Letters sufficient to demonstrate the promise of continued professional achievement and growth for the remainder of the individual's academic career. Evidence of actual and/or potential competitiveness for positions at other Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Universities, or comparable peers, is the appropriate measure of promise. In other words, achievement and performance levels must be competitive with faculties of leading research-intensive, land-grant, AAU universities of international scope (MSU's peers).

A recommendation for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor in the tenure system must be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements in education and scholarship across the mission. These achievements must be consistent with performance levels expected for promotion to associate professor at peer institutions, and there must be a sufficiently long period in rank prior to the promotion as to provide a firm basis in actual performance for predicting long term capacity for the achievement and maintenance of national stature and enduring high quality professional achievement. A recommendation for tenure for an individual appointed initially as associate professor on a probationary basis will be made if the individual has achieved the same level of promise (as the successful assistant professor promoted to associate professor with tenure) based on professional accomplishments.

A recommendation for promotion from associate professor to professor in the tenure system must be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements in education and scholarship across the mission. These achievements must be consistent with performance levels expected for promotion to professor at peer institutions, and there must be a sufficiently long period in rank prior to the promotion as to provide a firm basis in actual performance to permit endorsement of the individual as an expert or artist of national stature and to predict continuous, long-term, high quality professional achievement.

After full review of each candidate dossier, the college RPT committee makes a recommendation to the Dean. The committee recommendation on each case will be submitted to the Dean in the form of a letter, signed by each member of the committee who has participated in the review. As per the Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Toolkit, “the Dean meets with the College RPT committee and discusses each recommendation from the committee” (22).

All recommendations are understood to be advisory to the Provost until a final personnel action is taken.

The Dean, in submitting a recommendation to the Provost on each personnel action, will consider the RPT committee’s recommendation letter and will include an explanation for accepting or disagreeing with the recommendation. Information regarding unit and college evaluation criteria and expectations are included with the Dean’s recommendation in the Provost’s Office. The Dean, via the Chair, will inform each candidate of the action recommended by the committee and by the Dean her/himself. The Dean will also report to the committee whether s/he has agreed or disagreed with its recommendations. Consistent with University policy, any negative outcome of a personnel review (for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure) will be explained to the candidate in writing.

These guidelines were developed and adopted during Spring, 1999. They will guide College personnel actions until revised or replaced.

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