

Guidelines for department chairs in preparing dossiers recommending promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure¹, July 2024

The purpose of these guidelines is to help the candidate and department prepare the strongest possible dossier for promotion to associate professor with tenure. 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, please consult with the Senior Associate Dean.

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. The basic criteria for promotion and tenure or for the award of tenure only are found in the faculty handbook, section 4.12, <https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/the-new-faculty-handbook/4-tenure-track-promotions/4-1-the-tenure-process/4-1-2-tenure/>: "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 Secure File Transfer (SFT) (<https://sft.cornell.edu/login/>) to the Dean's assistant (Cindy Thompson) using the following deadlines:

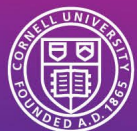
- June 1 for an effective tenure date of November 1
- August 1 for an effective tenure date of February 1
- September 1 for an effective tenure date of April 1
- December 1 for an effective tenure date of July 1

Once the electronic PDF dossier is delivered via SFT, it is reviewed to be sure all relevant sections have been submitted. An ad hoc committee (made up of 2 faculty within CHE and 1 outside of CHE) is selected to review 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 added to the dossier:

- the ad hoc committee report,
- any additional materials requested by the ad hoc committee or by the Senior Associate Dean
- a letter of recommendation from the Dean to the Provost

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

² [University Criteria](#)



FACTA (the Faculty Advisory Committee on Tenure Appointments) will advise the Provost. Following FACTA review, the Provost conveys the dossier to the Cornell University Board of Trustees. Approval of the award of tenure, or promotion and 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: [Faculty Handbook for appealing decisions for tenure.](#)

B. Documentation Required

ALL solicitations for letters must be done by the department and not by the candidate. The dossier should be submitted in PDF format using the bookmarks outlined below (i.e., numbered bold headings are bookmarks; lettered subheadings are sub-bookmarks) 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.

Unit Name: _____

Candidate's Name: _____

☐ Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

1. Department Head Recommendation

Letter from the Department Chair to the Dean with the recommendation regarding promotion and tenure. The letter should include the date of meeting and vote of tenured faculty and reasons for any objections, reservations, or abstentions. The vote 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 and may address community engagement/ outreach. 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" (below), not here.

Checklist for Section 1. Department recommendation:

- ☐ Unit head recommendation letter (Internal Review Committee letters are included in section 2 below.)
- ☐ Secondary program's letter (if appropriate)

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. In addition to the letter, each professor's vote must be documented. This may be included in each professor's letter, or ballots used in the decision can be included in



the dossier. If the department uses a departmental review committee, its report should be included in this section.

Checklist for Section 2. Faculty Assessments:

- ☐ Faculty Letters from each tenured faculty member in the home unit.
- ☐ When relevant, a departmental review committee report.

3. External Reviews

ALL solicitations for letters must be done by the department and **not** by the candidate. A copy of the letter requesting the evaluation must be included in the dossier. Prospective external reviewers should be contacted to determine their availability prior to sending them material. 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.

Note: How much of the dossier is made available to the external reviewers: The candidate has the right to determine the exact subset of their scholarly work that is accessible to the external reviewers.

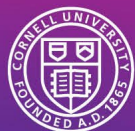
Recommendations to the candidate:

- Chosen content should be discussed with the chair but must include the CV.
- Chosen content should be easy to navigate with important items highlighted. A pdf dossier with bookmarks is recommended.
- Statements regarding research, teaching, service and community engagement/ outreach (if relevant) should be included.
- If the visibility of a publication requires payment of a fee or the purchase of a book, then steps must be taken to provide access.
- Do not share documents that are not (yet) intended for free public viewing.
- External reviewers are not in the position to interpret course evaluations so that data should never be included for external review. On the other hand, course syllabi, assignments, and examples of student work should be included.

Please review <https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/news/the-tenure-track-project/d-external-reviewer-selection/>

Note: The Charge to Evaluators: The role of external evaluators is to assess the candidate's accomplishments, stature in the field, and future promise. 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 are encouraged to 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 External evaluators should be given a charge that is as specific as possible. Instructions to external reviewers must include the following bullet points to guide them in their assessment reports:

³ [HR Guidelines for Tenure Track Promotions](#)



- Describe any contact, relationship or collaboration with the candidate.
 - What contributions has the candidate made to the knowledge base in their field?
 - Describe the candidate's impact on the field. Have their contributions earned a national or international reputation?
 - Please assess both the quantity and quality of the candidate's work.
 - What is your assessment of the candidate as a teacher or mentor?
 - What is your assessment of the candidate's community engagement/ outreach work [if relevant]?
 - How do you view the candidate's trajectory and future promise?
 - What is your assessment of the candidate's service to the profession at the local, national or international level?
 - Please provide your candidate opinion of whether this person should be awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in our unit at Cornell.
- 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. In addition, overlap between the two lists should be documented. Each of these tables must include the following information: names and institutions of all reviewers invited to 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 the invitation and noting that this was the case.
- **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.
 - **Evaluators Suggested by the Candidate:** The department should also provide letters from evaluators suggested by the candidate. Four to six such letters should be submitted. Two of the evaluators can be within arm's length (e.g., have some collaboration history) and should not include Cornell faculty. If the evaluator is a co-author or collaborator of the candidate, the letter should address the contribution of the candidate to the collaborative work.
- b.** CVs or biosketches of Evaluators selected by the department.
- c.** CVs or biosketches of Evaluators suggested by candidate.

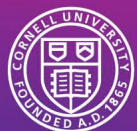
Checklist for Section 3. External Reviews:

- ☐ Table of all reviewers solicited in table format. The table should include:
 - ☐ Evaluators suggested by the department. (minimum of 5 and not more than 7)
 - ☐ Evaluators suggested by the candidate. (minimum of 4 and not more than 6)
 - ☐ Indication of "overlap" – evaluators suggested by both dept and candidate.
 - ☐ Solicitation letter s for each type of evaluator
- ☐ CV's or biosketches of evaluators selected by the department.
- ☐ CV's or biosketches of evaluators suggested by the candidate.

4. Candidate CV. The candidate should provide a complete and comprehensive CV.

Checklist for Section 4. CV:

- ☐ CV of the candidate



5. Candidate Statements

- a. **Teaching / Advising Statement.** If the candidate has a teaching appointment, they should provide a statement describing teaching goals and accomplishments. Advising and mentorship should also be described, if applicable.
- b. **Research Statement.** The candidate should provide a statement describing goals and objectives for the faculty's 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 includes information on external funding (a separate section on external funding can also be included if preferred. Include Google Scholar metrics. 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. **Community Engagement/ Outreach Statement.** (optional) The candidate may provide a statement describing work that is community-engaged. Community-engaged scholarship addresses real-world, community issues, involves the co-creation of knowledge, shared authority between academics and community experts, is bidirectional and requires long-term investment in relationship building. The products of community-engaged scholarship may include the implementation of a new policy or program; the community partner's application of findings from the collaboration; or the creation of a durable and public-facing product. The candidate may also choose to share other aspects of the impact of their work such as on policy, practice, and design.
- d. **Service Statement.** Evidence of service to the community, the department, the college, and the university.⁴

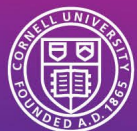
Checklist for Section 5. Statements:

- ☐ Teaching / Advising Statement
- ☐ Research Statement
 - ☐ When relevant, include information on external funding.
 - ☐ Report Google Scholar metrics
- ☐ Community Engagement/ Outreach Statement [optional]
- ☐ Service Statement

6. Teaching Materials

- a. **Courses Taught.** The dossier should include a listing of courses taught each year and enrollments in each. A course 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 recently hired faculty.
- b. **Student Course Evaluation Summaries.** These should be summarized in a table and not prepared by the candidate.
- c. **Student Letters.**

⁴ [Review process for tenure](#)



- **Teaching letters:** Include 5-10 letters from students who have completed the candidates Cornell course(s). These letters should be solicited by the unit and not by the candidate. Candidates may suggest students for the chair/ director to solicit, but no more than 50% of letters in this section may come from students suggested by the candidate. This section must contain a copy of the request letter, a list of students contacted, the method of student selection, and the rate of response.
- **Student advising letters:** Include 5-10 letters from representative student advisees selected and solicited by the unit. The letters should represent a sampling of undergraduate academic advisees, undergraduate research advisees, and graduate students. A copy of the request letter should be included as well as a list of advisees contacted.
- 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.⁵

Checklist for Section 6. Teaching:

- ☐ List of courses taught.
- ☐ Course syllabus for each course.
- ☐ Student course evaluation summaries in table format
- ☐ A letter requesting evaluation.
- ☐ Student letters.
 - ☐ Advising letters (minimum of 5 and not more than 10)
 - ☐ Teaching letters (minimum of 5 and not more than 10)
- ☐ Faculty Course Assessment of teaching and course materials.

C. APPENDIX:

- ☐ **Publications.** The candidate must submit representative publications showcasing his or her highest quality work.
- ☐ **Position Description.** Please include a copy of the original letter of appointment with salary information redacted, a copy of the original position description, and any subsequent letters, which altered expectations of the position and again with any salary information redacted. Any written response by the candidate to the above should be included as well.
- ☐ **Annual Reviews.** Include copies of the letter sent to the candidate following each annual review. Include candidate comments submitted in response to reviews, if any. If missing annual reviews, the Chair must address reasons in Chair's Letter or include a statement of explanation here.

⁵ Faculty [Handbook](#)