



# **Promotion and Tenure Guidelines 2024-2025**

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## Promotion and Tenure

These policies relate to the renewal or non-renewal of appointments of all tenure track faculty and to promotion actions for all tenure track and tenured faculty members.

### 1. General Overview Policies

The primary mechanism for faculty review lies within the candidate's department and college. It is, therefore, critical that the departments and colleges set clear criteria and quality standards. The promotion and tenure policies are designed to assure that high standards are maintained, and that due process is followed. Due process consists of two elements. First, faculty members have the right to easily access the department and college guidelines. As such, approved college and department promotion and tenure guidelines should be posted on the college and respective departmental websites. Second, candidates for promotion have the right to clarify vagueness, and/or correct factual errors before any recommendation is forwarded to the next level of review. These rights extend to all levels of review prior to a final decision being made by the Provost. It should be noted that a faculty request for an extension of the probationary period (see Sections 4.4 and 4.5) should not reflect negatively on that individual's review for tenure.

The promotion and tenure policies and guidelines provided by the Office of the Provost form the basis of all promotion and tenure decisions. Departmental guidelines and policies are subject to policies promulgated at the college and university levels. While a college or department may choose to implement more rigorous standards than those detailed in the university-level promotion and tenure guidelines, a college or department may not implement policies that result implicitly or explicitly in the application of less rigorous standards than detailed in the university-level promotion and tenure guidelines.

The University of Houston policies are guided by principles delineated by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP is online at <http://www.aaup.org/aaup>). To assure an equitable review, the following policies must be followed at each level and incorporated into departmental and college policies:

- A. Promotion and/or tenure review is a peer review process. For that reason, only tenured faculty should review and vote on tenure decisions; only professors should review and vote on applications for promotion to professor. Exceptions must be stated in the appropriate policies that apply at the departmental or college level.
- B. Committee recommendations at all review levels must be based on written tenure and promotion criteria and standards that have been previously approved by the Provost.
- C. Committee recommendations must include the name, rank, and title of each member of the review committee. Faculty who participate or vote on a candidate's file may only do so at one level. They may not be present at other levels. Faculty serving on promotion and tenure committees at any level shall not render decisions or participate in review or discussion on any candidate where a conflict of interest exists.
- D. Committees conduct independent reviews and make written recommendations based on an examination of all portfolio materials, including external arms-length letters of review and internal review findings (see External Arms-Length Reviews section). Committee deliberations at all levels shall be conducted in confidence. In addition, committee findings at all levels of review (both positive and negative) shall be shared in writing with the candidate and the appropriate administrators.
- E. Department chairs or department heads and deans conduct independent reviews and make written recommendations based on an examination of all portfolio materials, including external arms-length

letters of review and committee findings (see External Arms-Length Reviews section). Written recommendations (both positive and negative) provided by department chairs/deans shall be shared in writing with the candidate and the appropriate administrator.

- F. Each subsequent review body is responsible for considering and documenting any problems it identifies in the prior review and for making every effort to correct any errors caused by those problems.
- G. Candidates are entitled to a reconsideration of the chair's/department head's, Dean's, and Provost's initial negative recommendations. Further, candidates are entitled to reconsideration of initial negative recommendations by the department, college and university promotion and tenure committees. Reconsiderations during the promotion and tenure process are limited to errors of fact and procedure. Other avenues of appeal concerning errors of fact and procedure during the promotion and tenure process may be available to the candidate subsequent to the completion of the promotion and tenure process pursuant to university grievance policy.
- H. Candidates may update their portfolios before the materials are sent to the next level. Updates should be limited to revisions/additions that materially impact the overall review process (e.g. notification of final acceptance of a manuscript/chapter/book for publication previously listed in the portfolio as in press, award of an externally funded grant/fellowship previously listed in the portfolio as submitted, award of a professional membership or honors, etc.). Candidates should submit any qualifying revisions/additions to their college promotion and tenure liaison as a single request to update their portfolio immediately prior to the portfolio being sent to the next level of review. Candidates must submit a 1-2 page PDF in which they provide the updated information – they should not provide revisions of materials already submitted for promotion review.
- I. After the Provost's final decision, candidates may initiate a grievance within 30 calendar days of receipt of the Provost's letter pursuant to university grievance policy.

## **2. Criteria and Standards for Promotion and Tenure**

### **2.1 University Criteria**

The basic criteria and standards of the University of Houston reflect a commitment to academic excellence. It is the expectation that faculty members shall meet the highest standards of their disciplines within the domains of scholarship, teaching and service. Specifically, all candidates for tenure and/or promotion are to demonstrate their effectiveness as scholars and teachers and that they have advanced knowledge or creativity in their respective disciplines or have made significant creative contributions in their academic areas with evidence of external recognition. This should be substantiated by appropriate publications, reviewed presentations or other appropriate publicly available communications or works. Service may involve contributions to departmental and college efforts, to campus-wide activities, to external professional, state, national and/or federal organizations as well as community engagement. No single source of information, such as peer review letters, shall be considered a conclusive indicator of quality.

### **2.2 Criteria by Rank**

Promotion to associate professor with tenure requires that faculty members have made high quality contributions to knowledge as a result of their scholarly and/or creative achievements, that they are effective teachers, and they have demonstrated an appropriate level of service. There should be evidence of regional, national and/or international recognition of the candidate's achievements and ability. The evaluations of the candidates' portfolios are conducted by tenured peers in the

department and/or college with input from external reviewers. (See *External Arms-Length Reviews* section) The evaluation must find that the candidate has demonstrated a commitment to academic excellence and that there is reasonable expectation that the candidate will meet the standard for promotion to professor in due course.

Promotion to the rank of professor requires significant contributions to the candidate's field that have had a scholarly or creative impact beyond the university. There should be evidence of national and/or international recognition of the candidate's achievements and ability. The application portfolio will document a record of accomplishments in scholarship/creativity, teaching, and service responsibilities that are distinguished by quality and significance over time.

### **2.3 Department / College Criteria**

Departments and/or colleges are responsible for the application of the criteria and standards for promotion and tenure, consistent with prevailing standards of excellence in their own disciplines. Departmental criteria and standards must first be reviewed and approved by the Dean before final approval by the Office of the Provost and then distributed by the college and/or department to its faculty. At the request of the Provost, departments and colleges will review their promotion and tenure guidelines every five years. Any changes require approval of the Provost or designee before implementation. In addition to being accessible through the [Provost P&T website](#), approved college and department promotion and tenure guidelines should be posted on the respective college and departmental websites for ready access.

### **3. Tenure**

Tenure at the University of Houston is awarded by Board of Regents upon recommendation by the Chancellor of the University of Houston System and President of the University of Houston and by the Chief Academic Officer (Provost), in the normal course of promotion and tenure review, and upon the basis of recommendations initiated by departments and reviewed carefully by the colleges, and the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. These recommendations result from an assessment of the individual's achievement and an estimate of future achievement. It is awarded on the basis of scholarship, creative work, teaching and service excellence to date, consistent with the mission of the university, and implies a high degree of confidence in the continuation and enhancement of this performance for the benefit of the University. An affirmative decision represents a positive judgment that the individual has contributed and will continue to contribute to the development of excellence in the academic programs at the University of Houston, particularly within the context of the individual's college. Recommendations for promotion and tenure shall be transmitted annually from the Provost to the Chancellor/President, with all supporting documentation submitted by May 1 of each year and shall be effective at the beginning of the succeeding academic year. Tenure awarded at the University of Houston does not entail tenure at any other university of the University of Houston System and never applies to administrative appointments.

Tenure may be granted to tenure track faculty members upon the successful completion of a probationary period at the University of Houston. With the approval of the Board of Regents based upon recommendations of the Chancellor and President, and the Chief Academic Officer (Provost), new faculty offers of appointment with tenure may be made as provided in System Administrative Memorandum 06.A.09 *Academic Personnel Policies*. No person shall be appointed to the position of Dean or equivalent, or Vice President or equivalent, without prior consultation with the Chancellor and in accordance with Board of Regents Policy 57.10 *Executive Management Employees*. No administrator may be given faculty status or tenure without review by and positive recommendations from the appropriate committees in the academic unit involved. Further, as outlined in section 3.2 of

this policy, appointment with tenure requires recommendation by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee or a subcommittee of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, approval by the Chief Academic Officer (Provost) and the Chancellor and President, and affirmed by the Board of Regents. Tenure at the University of Houston may not be granted or held if tenure is held simultaneously at another institution. The service of tenured faculty shall be terminated only for adequate cause, except in cases of financial exigency, discontinuance of programs, medical reasons, resignation, or retirement (see Board of Regents Policy 21.07 *Faculty Dismissal*, [SAM 06.A.09 Academic Personnel Policies](#), and current Faculty Handbook, *Dismissal for Medical Reasons*).

### **3.1 Tenure for Non-citizens**

In order to be granted tenure a faculty candidate must either be a citizen of the U.S. or have permanent residence. In order to be considered for tenure, non-tenured tenure-track faculty who are not U.S. citizens must have permanent residence by the end of the spring semester prior to the year in which the tenure review will take place. Alternatively, a candidate must have a USCIS approved labor certification/Form I-140 Immigrant Petition on file with USCIS, listing the University of Houston as the sponsoring institution if immigrating via sponsored employment. Additionally, candidates may not be considered for tenure review if they are currently subject to the two-year home country residence requirement *unless* the candidate has (1) received a waiver of the 212e requirement or (2) fulfilled the two-year home country residence requirement by the end of the spring semester prior to the year in which the tenure review will take place. The probationary period will not be extended in the event that a faculty member does not have permanent residence or has otherwise not met these requirements by that time.

In the event that the labor certification/I-140 has been approved, and the adjustment of status or consular immigrant visa application is pending, the faculty member may be considered for tenure. In the case of a faculty candidate eligible for tenure consideration, tenure, if recommended and approved, will not be officially granted by the University until such time that permanent residence has been granted by the USCIS.

Faculty members who through no fault of their own are unable to obtain approved labor certification/Form I-140 Immigrant Petition at the time a decision on tenure review eligibility must be made, but who remain authorized to work in the United States will be eligible for continued employment and advancement of rank pursuant to the promotion and tenure guidelines as a non-tenured tenure-track faculty member, but will not be eligible for the accompanying award of academic tenure until permanent residency has been established.

If U.S. permanent resident status is denied, the faculty member shall be terminated from the university at the end of the current academic year in which they are notified of denial if at least a full long semester of the academic year remains, or by the end of the following long semester if less than a full semester remains in the current academic year in which they are notified of denial, or until the faculty member is no longer legally authorized to be employed with the university, whichever occurs sooner. Termination for failure to obtain U.S. permanent resident status shall not be grievable.

### **3.2 Appointment with Tenure**

Usually, faculty members hired with tenure on appointment are highly sought-after individuals who have a demonstrated record of scholarly achievement at the national and international level. As such, the university has a separate expedited review process for appointment with tenure. A proposed faculty hire with tenure must be reviewed and voted on by the promotion and tenure committee both in the home department and at

the college level. This documentation along with appropriate department chair and dean recommendation letters are submitted to the Provost or designee for review and recommendation by the full University Promotion and Tenure Committee or a subcommittee of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Additional documentation may be required by the Provost. Guidance on this expedited process is provided on the [Office of the Provost website](#). The University Promotion and Tenure Committee or the subcommittee will then submit a written recommendation to the Provost or designee. Hiring of a faculty member with tenure must be affirmed by the Board of Regents upon recommendation by the Chancellor and President, and the Chief Academic Officer (Provost). Individuals whose positions are classified as full-time University of Houston staff due to the nature of their administrative role, may negotiate a tenured position during the hiring process. The normal review process for hiring with tenure must be followed including policies applicable to administrators with faculty rank, including executive management employees. Tenure does not exist in any administrative capacity; tenure may only be awarded in conjunction with faculty rank. No person shall be appointed to the position of Dean or equivalent, or Vice President or equivalent, without prior consultation with the President and in accordance with Board of Regents Policy 57.10 and [SAM 06.A.09 Academic Personnel Policies](#).

#### **4. Probationary Period**

For non-tenured tenure track faculty, the probationary period is defined as the time a faculty member spends under annual appointment in a tenure track position prior to being awarded tenure. The number of years and the terms of the probationary period shall be specified in the appointment letter. Up to three years of prior full-time collegiate-level teaching at the rank of assistant professor or above may be credited to the probationary period. Credit towards the probationary period of an assistant professor is discouraged since this significantly shortens the length of time the faculty member has to achieve the research, scholarship, and creative work, as well as the teaching and service accomplishments necessary to achieve tenure. Per University of Houston System policy ([SAM 06.A.09](#)), Tenure-track (TT) assistant professors shall serve a probationary period not to exceed seven years, at least four of which must be at the specific University of Houston System component university. Any credit towards the probationary period that may be requested shall be documented in the original appointment letter approved by the Provost.

For probationary appointments at all ranks, the final and mandatory review for tenure shall take place in the year prior to the final probationary year--e.g., year six of a seven-year probationary period for initial appointment at the assistant professor rank, or, year three of a four-year probationary period for initial appointment at the associate or full professor rank.

Cases considered before the mandatory review year are considered accelerated reviews (see 4.3 Time Periods). Requests for accelerated review of tenure and/or promotion with tenure must be made in writing to the department chair and have the approval of the dean. Documentation that the request for such a non-mandatory, accelerated review has been approved by the dean should be forwarded to the Office of the Provost prior to May 1st of the calendar year in which the review will be submitted. Candidates who request accelerated review of tenure or promotion with tenure should ensure that they have developed a track record of performance that is truly exceptional in all appropriate domains at the University of Houston at their current rank.

Any modification to the terms of the probationary period for childbirth or adoption shall be administered in accordance with the current academic policy on extension of probationary period for childbirth or adoption (see Sections 4.4-4.6). Other types of leaves of absence shall only be considered as part of the probationary period for tenure if stipulated in a written agreement between the faculty member and the dean of the



college prior to the leave period, with the approval of the Provost (see Sections 4.4-4.6). See BOR policy 57.06 Leaves of Absence generally, [SAM 06.A.09](#) section 2.8, Faculty Leaves of Absence, and current version of the Faculty Handbook on Leaves of Absences.

#### **4.1 Reviews during Probationary Period**

As per University policy, every tenure-track faculty member shall undergo an annual performance review conducted by the department chair or appropriate administrator with input from a committee according to departmental and/or college procedures. All tenure-track faculty members initially appointed at the assistant professor level must undergo a thorough pre-tenure review. This pre-tenure review is in addition to the faculty annual performance review required of all faculty members and will be carried out according to departmental and /or college procedures. This pre-tenure review normally is conducted during the faculty member's third year for those on a seven-year probationary period. The faculty member under pre-tenure review must submit a portfolio in accordance with departmental/college policies and criteria utilized for mandatory tenure review. Independent reviews will be conducted by the appropriate committee and administrator at the departmental level and then at the college level. These independent reviews will detail the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-tenure review portfolio, and where appropriate include specific remedial measures and any additional reviews required prior to the mandatory review. The final letters generated as part of the pre-tenure review(s) become part of any subsequent mandatory tenure review portfolio. Those faculty members who are appointed at the associate professor rank with a probationary period of four years are not subject to a third-year pre-tenure review since their mandatory review begins at the start of the third year of their probation.

#### **4.2 Non-renewal of Appointment of a Tenure Track Faculty Member**

The decision to deny tenure shall be made no later than twelve months prior to the expiration of the probationary period, except as provided below. Written notice to the tenure track faculty that a probationary appointment is not to be renewed shall be given to the faculty member by the dean in advance of the expiration of the appointment, according to the following schedule of dates codified in [SAM 06.A.09 Academic Personnel Policies](#).

- A. For tenure track faculty in the first academic year of the probationary period, notice must be given not later than March 1 that their appointments will end at the conclusion of the current academic year; or, if a one-year appointment expires during an academic year, at least three months in advance of its expiration.
- B. For tenure track faculty in the second academic year of the probationary period, notice must be given not later than December 15 of the second academic year of service that their appointments will end at the conclusion of the current academic year; or, if an initial two-year appointment expires during an academic year, at least six months in advance of its expiration.
- C. For tenure track faculty in the third or later year of the probationary period, notice must be given not later than May 31 of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the appointment is to expire.

The appointments of untenured tenure track faculty members are governed by the fact that Texas is an “at-will” state. The decision not to renew the appointment of an untenured tenure track faculty member is not a form of dismissal for cause. Non-reappointment of a tenure track faculty member without tenure does not



require justification of professional inadequacy nor is the faculty member affected by the decision entitled to a statement of the reasons upon which the decision for such action is based. The faculty member may grieve the non-renewal decision to the Provost if the faculty member believes the decision to be a violation of the faculty member's contractual rights or an infringement upon the exercise of rights guaranteed by the laws or the constitution of this state or of the United States. The grievance must be filed in writing with the Provost within thirty calendar days of receipt of the notice of non-renewal. The faculty member may request a personal meeting with the Provost or may elect to proceed in writing only. The Provost's decision on the non-renewal decision is the final institutional step in this matter and shall not be subject to further review. When a bona fide financial exigency or the elimination of a program necessitates the reduction of the number of tenured faculty members, efforts shall be made to place the faculty members in other related faculty assignments. For University of Houston financial exigency policy, see BOR 21.07 Faculty Dismissal, [SAM 06.A.09 Academic Personnel Policies](#), and current version of the Faculty Handbook.

### 4.3 Time Periods

(For a basic definition of these ranks, see current version of the Faculty Handbook.)

- A. **Assistant professors** on the tenure-track shall normally serve a probationary period not to exceed seven years. Promotion to associate professor is concurrent with the award of tenure unless otherwise stipulated by the Provost due to special circumstances. Per University of Houston System policy (i.e. [SAM 06.A.09](#)), tenure-track assistant professors shall serve a probationary period not to exceed seven years, at least four of which must be at the specific University of Houston System university.

If a faculty member begins employment after the beginning of an academic year but prior to the end of the spring semester of that academic year, either the probationary period for that faculty member shall be less than seven years, or the faculty member shall serve in a non-tenure track position for the remainder of that academic year and shall then have a probationary period of seven years.

Normally, the university requires that all assistant professors hold a terminal degree by August 1 in order to be appointed to the faculty at the beginning of the next academic year (i.e. Sept 1). If the terminal degree has not been awarded by August 1, with the approval of the Provost a faculty member may be appointed for the upcoming academic year as a tenure-track faculty member with the title of Instructor. An instructor appointment is temporary in nature and has a maximum duration of one academic year.

In accordance with the terms of the original appointment letter, if a faculty member is initially appointed at the beginning of the academic year as an instructor and is awarded the terminal degree by the end of the academic year (i.e. May 31), they will be transferred into an assistant professor position beginning the fall (i.e. Sept 1) of the next academic year. If a faculty member appointed as an instructor fails to be awarded their terminal degree by the end of the academic year (i.e. May 31) they will be terminated at the end of the academic year. No instructor may be awarded tenure.

- B. **Associate professors** appointed without tenure shall normally serve a probationary period not to exceed four years. Associate professors may be appointed with tenure in accordance with applicable university policies. The normative time period for a tenured associate professor before being promoted to tenured professor varies due to different expectations in different

disciplines. Promotion reviews considered prior to the sixth year are considered accelerated. Candidates who request accelerated review of tenure or promotion with tenure should ensure that they have developed a track record of performance that is truly exceptional in all appropriate domains at the University of Houston at their current rank.

- C. **Professors** appointed without tenure shall normally serve a probationary period not to exceed four years. Professors may be appointed with tenure in accordance with applicable university policies.

#### **4.4 Extension of Probationary Period for Childbirth or Adoption**

An untenured tenure-track faculty member who becomes a parent due to the birth or adoption of a child and who is responsible for the care of that child will be granted a one-year extension of the probationary period with the approval of the Provost. Extension of the probationary period is automatic for reasons of childbirth and/or adoption upon notification of the department chair or director and the Office of the Provost (see Section 4.6 for the maximum number of extensions for all reasons).

The department chair is responsible for forwarding the extension request by email to the college dean or designee. The request for extension is then forwarded to Faculty Affairs (facultyaffairs@uh.edu) by the college. Faculty Affairs will record the extension and respond with information about revised review dates.

For purposes of this policy, a child is a newborn or, in the case of adoption, a minor. Also, a tenure track faculty member who is responsible for the care of the child is one who is responsible for significant and continuous care of his or her newborn or adopted child. If both parents are tenure track faculty members, both parents shall qualify as a caregiver.

#### **4.5 Policy on Extension of the Probationary Period for Emergencies**

An untenured tenure-track faculty member has the right to request an extension of the probationary period based on unforeseen emergency events, such as serious personal illness, family emergencies or circumstances beyond the control of the faculty member.

Emergency events include systemic disruptions which may negatively impact the ability of the faculty member to conduct their research and scholarship, and to make satisfactory progress towards tenure and promotion. Such systemic events may also negatively impact the academy-at-large, leading to a significant and prolonged disruption in the ability of the faculty member to disseminate and publish their research and scholarship. Extensions related to impacts of COVID are not permitted for those hired on/after 9/1/2022.

With support of their department chair and/or dean, a faculty member may request an extension based on the negative impact of such a systemic event on their timely progression towards promotion and/or tenure. Because of the potentially prolonged and unforeseen negative impact of such systemic events, requests for extension based on such systemic disruptions may be made at any time during the probationary period. Such requests must be made in writing and normally will not be considered after March 1 of the academic year prior to the mandatory tenure review period. Requests for extensions based on emergency situations other than systemic disruptions must be made in writing and submitted within six months after the emergency event has occurred.

All emergency extension requests must be forwarded through the department chair or department head and

Dean to the Provost. The Provost will inform the dean of his or her decision concerning the extension request and any subsequent change in the year of the mandatory tenure review. These decisions should be made as soon as practicable.

#### **4.6 Maximum Number of Extensions of the Probationary Period and Timeliness of Requests**

The extension of the probationary period may occur at most twice (for a total of two years). Requests for extensions of the probationary period must occur within six months after the event has occurred and will not be considered after March 1 of the academic year prior to the tenure review period.

#### **5. University of Houston Promotion and Tenure Committee**

Fourteen colleges are currently represented on the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, including: the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture, the Katherine G. McGovern College of the Arts, the C. T. Bauer College of Business, the College of Education, the Cullen College of Engineering, the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership, the Hobby School of Public Affairs, the UH Law Center, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Andy and Barbara Gessner College of Nursing, the College of Optometry, the College of Pharmacy, , and the Graduate College of Social Work.

The Provost selects one faculty representative from each of the colleges based on four nominations, two from the Faculty Governance Committee of the Faculty Senate and two from the Dean. Nominees must be tenured professors. Members serve three-year terms with approximately one-third of the membership due for replacement annually.

If appointed to an administrative position (such as dean, department chair, department head, assistant deans, or associate deans) while serving on the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the member will be replaced at the appropriate time by the Provost.

Faculty who participate and/or vote on a candidate's file at one level may not participate, be present, or vote on that candidate at another level.

#### **Promotion and Tenure Guidelines**

(Note: As the Faculty Handbook is revised on a biennial basis, please check the Faculty Senate website at <https://uh.edu/faculty-senate/resources-and-publications/faculty-handbook/> for the most current information).

#### **6. University Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Reviews**

Each spring, department chairs and deans inform all faculty with upcoming mandatory tenure reviews that their applications will be considered during the next promotion and tenure cycle. The Provost's Office will issue annual procedures, guidelines, checklist and timeline on or around May 1 to all deans and department chairs or department heads. Before the end of the spring semester, these administrators should provide the web addresses of the department, college, and university procedures, guidelines and timelines to all candidates for promotion and/or tenure, which should be accessible on the college and/or department's respective websites.

Candidates are encouraged to obtain applicable procedures, guidelines, and timelines for departmental and

college reviews. Procedures and the submission process for university reviews are listed on the [Provost's Office website](#).

Candidates up for non-mandatory review may withdraw their applications for promotion and/or tenure without penalty at any time during the review process prior to the portfolio being transmitted to the University P&T committee. See section on Procedures for Non-Mandatory Review (see Section 9) However, when the review is mandatory, the withdrawal must be accompanied by a resignation letter effective no later than the end of the terminal year and a signed Faculty Separation Form.

Candidates must be advised of a decision not to award tenure at least 12 months prior to the expiration of the probationary period. After the Provost's final decision, should the candidate believe that there were serious procedural violations that subsequent reviews failed to correct, the candidate may file a grievance with the University Grievance Committee (see promotion and tenure grievance procedures in the current version of the Faculty Handbook).

## **7. Department/College Reviews**

### **7.1 Prior to the Review**

#### **7.1.1 Timeline for Review**

Deadlines for uploading the candidate's portfolio to the University's electronic promotion and tenure site, completing the departmental-level committee, chair, college-level committee and dean review will be determined within the college. This timeline must allow a minimum of five working days to allow rebuttal by the candidate of a negative recommendation or to offer new information at each and all levels of the review process. Colleges must complete their review and submit the complete portfolio to the university review level by the last day of class of the fall semester.

#### **7.1.2 Department**

The candidate is responsible for assembling and uploading specific items to the University's electronic promotion and tenure site. Candidates are also responsible for maintaining a copy of all portfolio materials they are responsible for assembling and uploading (See Candidate's Electronic Folder section). Candidates should include appropriate documentation that reflects their achievements in research/scholarship/creative work, teaching and instruction, and service documentation in the portfolio.

The department is responsible for assembling and uploading specific items to the University's electronic promotion and tenure site. The department chair (or applicable committee depending on departmental/college bylaws) is responsible for requesting external arms-length review letters for the promotion and tenure candidates (See External Arms-Length Reviews section).

#### **7.1.3 College**

Each college must have written policy statements that govern the promotion and tenure process at the college level. These policies state criteria for tenure and promotion. College procedures take precedence over departmental policies. At the request of the Provost, departments and colleges will review their promotion and tenure guidelines every five years. Any changes require approval of the Provost before implementation.

## **7.2 During the Review**

### **7.2.1 Department**

Departmental review committees are responsible for reviewing all persons applying for tenure and promotion in the department and for writing a recommendation letter. The letter must address the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate and justify the recommendation. The letters must list all committee members, their rank, and specify the total number of positive (yes) and negative (no) votes and abstentions. Rationale for votes, including split votes shall be indicated in the letter.

Department chairs are responsible for reviewing all persons applying for tenure and promotion in the department and for writing a recommendation letter. The letter must address the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate and justify the recommendation. Justification for each recommendation should be clearly and fully stated. Moreover, justifications should address the merits of each individual case and should not be mere summaries or restatements of earlier assessments. Department chairs are responsible for conducting an independent review and correction of any errors in the departmental evaluation that were caused by procedural problems within the committee.

In the case where the department chair is not a tenured associate professor when evaluating promotion with tenure from assistant to associate or tenure at the associate level, or where the department chair is not a tenured professor when evaluating promotion from associate to professor, the dean will assign a tenured professor from the same department to serve as acting chair for the purposes of the promotion and tenure review or may choose someone from a similar department if no suitable faculty member is available.

Written recommendations (both positive and negative) provided by departmental committees, department chairs, college committees and deans shall be shared in writing with the candidate.

In the event of an initial negative recommendation, candidates may ask for reconsideration in writing of the committee's and/or chair's decisions to rebut statements made or to offer new information for the review. The reconsideration may not question the professional judgment of the reviewer or review body. After the reconsideration, the review body shall respond in writing to the candidate. The reviewer or review body may choose to comment on any new evidence offered but is not required to do so. The reviewer or review body shall provide notification either reaffirming their initial recommendation or indicating a change in vote or recommendation, but need not provide any further additional justification if reaffirming their initial decision. However, if the recommendation has changed, the rationale must be provided in the written notification.

The chair is responsible for ensuring that the departmental committee's votes and their justification, the chair's decision, and any rehearing letters are included in the candidate's electronic folder prior to college-level review. University policy mandates that no extraneous or additional materials be included in the candidate's electronic folder prior to college-level review other than those materials that have been previously reviewed by the departmental committee and/or department chair. Examples of extraneous materials include letters of support solicited by the candidate, additional review letters not present in the candidate's portfolio at the beginning of the review process, information in the candidate's faculty personnel file other than summaries of annual performance reviews, letters from committee members expressing individual or minority opinions, etc.

The department/college must maintain a copy of the candidate's portfolio in a confidential manner. Additionally, all dossiers must be reviewed using the secure electronic platform established and maintained by the Office of the Provost. Dossiers shall not be shared with anyone outside of the secure electronic platform or otherwise distributed to parties not on the review committees.

### **7.2.2 College**

College review committees are responsible for reviewing all persons applying for promotion and tenure within the College and for writing a recommendation letter. The letter must address the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate and justify the recommendation. The letter must list all committee members, their rank, and specify the total number of positive (yes) and negative (no) votes and abstentions. Rationale for votes, including split votes shall be indicated in the letter. College committees are responsible for conducting an independent review and correcting any errors in the evaluation process caused by procedural issues that occurred at previous levels of review.

Deans, in consultation with college promotion and tenure committees, are responsible for reviewing all persons applying for tenure and promotion in the college and for writing a recommendation letter. The letter must address the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate and justify the recommendation. Justification for each recommendation should be clearly and fully stated. Moreover, justifications should address the merits of each individual case and should not be mere summaries or restatements of earlier assessments. Deans are responsible for conducting an independent review and correcting any errors in the evaluation process that were caused by procedural issues that occurred at previous levels of review.

In the event of an initial negative recommendation, candidates may request, in writing reconsideration of the committee's and/or dean's decisions. This process is designed for faculty members to rebut statements made or to offer new information. The reconsideration may not question the professional judgment of the reviewer or review body. After the reconsideration, the reviewer or review body shall respond in writing to the candidate. The reviewer or review body may choose to comment on any new evidence offered but is not required to do so. The reviewer or review body shall provide notification either reaffirming their initial recommendation or indicating a change in vote or recommendation, but need not provide any further additional justification if reaffirming their initial decision

The dean is responsible for ensuring that the committee's votes and their justification, the dean's decision, and any rehearing letters are included in the candidate's electronic folder prior to university-level review, by the last class day of the fall semester. University policy mandates that no extraneous materials be included in the candidate's electronic folder prior to university-level review other than those materials that have been previously reviewed by the college committee and/or dean. Examples of extraneous materials include letters of support solicited by the candidate, additional review letters not present in the candidate's portfolio at the beginning of the review process, information in the candidate's faculty personnel file other than summaries of annual performance reviews, letters from committee members expressing individual or minority opinions, etc.

## **8. University Reviews**

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee advises the Provost on all promotion and tenure candidates including those proposed hires with tenure (see [SAM 06.A.09](#) appointment provisions and foregoing section of this policy addressing appointment with tenure). The committee provides its recommendation, accompanied by the votes and justification to the Provost, who then conducts an independent review. The Provost may seek additional advice from members of his/her staff, the dean, or

other appropriate persons. The Provost informs each candidate of his/her decision.

In the event of an initial negative recommendation, candidates may ask for reconsideration in writing of the committee decision to review errors of fact or procedure. The reconsideration may not question the professional judgment of the review body. After the reconsideration, the review body shall respond in writing to the Provost. The review body may choose to comment on any new evidence offered but is not required to do so. If the recommendation after reconsideration remains unchanged, the review body need not prepare any further justification and may stand by the initial justification. However, if the recommendation has changed, the rationale must be provided in the written notification.

After any reconsideration, the Provost makes final recommendations and provides justifications to the Chancellor/President. The Chancellor/President reviews those recommendations and makes tenure decisions and recommends promotion actions to the Board of Regents, which makes the final tenure and/or promotion decisions. The promotion and tenure actions take effect at the beginning of the following academic year.

## **9. Procedures for Non-Mandatory Reviews**

Faculty who would like to be considered for a non-mandatory promotion should contact the department chair and the dean's office and obtain a copy of the University Guidelines. The timelines and procedures are generally the same as for mandatory reviews.

Faculty members undergoing non-mandatory reviews who believe they will be unsuccessful at the University level may withdraw their applications without penalty at any time during the departmental and/or college level review process. However, once a non-mandatory review that involves a recommendation for tenure (with or without a promotion in rank) has been forwarded to the university level it will then be considered a mandatory review subject to the same review and decision processes as any other mandatory tenure review. When the review is mandatory, the withdrawal must be accompanied by a resignation letter effective no later than the end of the terminal year and a signed Faculty Separation Form.

## **10. External Arms-Length Reviews**

Typically, the department chair, department head, or dean is responsible for requesting confidential, external arms-length review letters for candidates undergoing promotion and/or tenure review. In some cases, this responsibility may fall to a faculty committee as stated in the applicable departmental or college bylaws.

External arms-length reviewers should have achieved: national recognition in their field and currently hold tenure as an Associate or Full Professor at a comparable Tier 1 Research University to be eligible to provide a recommendation letter for promotion and/or tenure at the Associate Professor level; or national or international recognition in their field and currently hold tenure as a Full Professor at a comparable Tier 1 Research University if providing a letter of recommendation for an Associate Professor candidate seeking promotion to Full Professor. External arms-length reviewers may not be a current faculty member in the University of Houston System. External arms-length reviewers shall not be former thesis/dissertation advisors, co-authors, former students, relatives, former collaborators, mentors, or close personal friends of the candidate. External arms-length reviewers must have demonstrated expertise or knowledge in the area of the candidate's scholarship. Typically, Emeritus professors are not considered eligible to provide external arms-length review letters.



As part of the process for selecting qualified external reviewers, the names of up to six external, arms-length reviewers will be solicited from the candidate by the department chair/department head. While the final selection and solicitation of qualified external reviewers is ultimately the responsibility of the department chair/department head (or other entity stated in the department/college bylaws), every effort will be made to include qualified individuals suggested by the candidate as approximately half of the external reviewers.

Letters soliciting confidential reviews from potential external arms-length reviewers should include a brief description of the candidate's department and its mission. Letters should also specify a date for return of the evaluation. Candidates will not be shown or have access to external review letters as part of the promotion and tenure process. Solicitation letters to reviewers must include relevant criteria for promotion and/or tenure (see Criteria by Rank section). The candidate's electronic folder should typically contain four to six letters, but no less than three and no more than nine external arms-length review letters. All external arms-length review letters received in response to a department's request must be included in the candidate's electronic folder. For the purpose of review, the candidate's electronic folder must contain one sample copy of the solicitation letters to reviewers, a one-paragraph description of the qualifications of each external arms-length reviewer (also include name, title, rank, position, and institutional affiliation), disclosure of any prior relationship between the candidate and the reviewer that could be perceived to impact the "arms-length" nature of the review, and a description of the process used for the selection of the external arms-length reviewers including a list of the nominators of outside reviewers. Candidates will not be shown or have access to this information.

When requesting evaluations, the chair or department head shall ask the external reviewers to respond to the following questions:

- A. What is the nature, if any, of your professional contact with and knowledge of the candidate?
- B. Does the candidate's work, taken as a whole, constitute a serious and significant contribution to the discipline? (If applying for tenure, there should be evidence of regional, national or international recognition of the candidate's achievements and ability. If applying for promotion to professor, there should be evidence of national or international recognition of the candidate's achievements and ability.)
- C. What is your assessment of the candidate's contributions in the areas of research, scholarship or other creative activity?
- D. Is the candidate a scholar whose work is likely to become known and respected by leaders in the field?
- E. Does the external reviewer recommend promotion and/or tenure of the candidate?

Please also include the below statement (or similar statement) in your solicitations for external reviews.

Our college and university policies provide that external evaluations are kept confidential; however, please be advised that universities are sometimes required to release external review letters as a result of legal action.

## Candidate's Portfolio/Electronic Folder

Thorough documentation should be submitted by the candidate as evidence for all items claimed in the candidate's vita. A candidate checklist is available on the [Provost's website](#).

The party responsible for assembling and/or uploading the various items required to be included in the portfolio are indicated below.

### A. Face Sheet

This electronic form must be entered by the College P&T Liaison, with assistance by Office of the Provost staff.

### B. Current College and Departmental P&T Guidelines

### C. Internal Letters

The candidate's electronic folder must include any department or college committee evaluation reports generated during any non-mandatory pre-tenure review, letters from chair to dean and dean to Provost, and any appeals letters. University policy mandates that no extraneous letters or materials be included. (See Section 7.2 - During the Review)

For those coming up for tenure, copies of the initial letter of appointment to the university and the results of any mandatory probationary reviews (e.g. pre-tenure review) must be included in the candidate's electronic folder. For promotion to professor, documentation of previous promotion or appointment letter must be included.

This documentation will be prepared and uploaded by the candidate's department or college.

### D. External Arms-Length Review Letters

The department chair (or dean in those colleges without departments, or applicable committee depending on departmental/college bylaws) is responsible for requesting confidential external arms-length review letters for candidates undergoing promotion and tenure review (See Section 10 External Reviews). The candidate's department chair (or dean in colleges without department chairs) is responsible for uploading this documentation.

### E. Candidate's Statement

The candidate must include a brief (no more than three pages) statement. The statement may include academic career goals, accomplishments, and directions for future work. The candidate may describe how all facets of their career form an integrated, successful profile or the candidate may identify achievements in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service separately. This documentation will be combined with the Curriculum Vitae and uploaded by the candidate.

### F. Curriculum Vitae

The candidate must include a curriculum vitae that is appropriate for the discipline. This documentation will be combined with the candidate statement and uploaded by the candidate.

### G. Candidate Portfolio

The purpose of the portfolio is to provide detailed supporting documentation demonstrating the current and likely future impact of the candidate's activities in research, teaching, and service. The documentation should support the information contained in the candidate's Curriculum Vitae and the

Candidate's Statement. The portfolio documentation will be prepared and uploaded by the candidate.

The following categories are suggested for candidates to organize and document their professional achievements in the portfolio. A one-page table of contents must accompany each of the below components of the dossier.

## 1. Research, Scholarship, Creative Work

- a. Scholarly/Creative Work - Representative Works:** Include a list and samples or descriptions of scholarly/creative products sufficient to demonstrate the scope, quality, and impact of the candidate's activities. For each sample state candidate's role and contribution.
- b. Funded Research/Scholarly/Creative Work Grants:** The following information should be included for each grant:
  - (1) Name of the principal investigator and all co-investigators;
  - (2) Title of the grant proposal;
  - (3) Funding agency;
  - (4) Amount of the grant and the amount allocated to the candidate;
  - (5) Time period of the grant; and
  - (6) Candidate's role, contribution, and percent effort.
- c. Research Proposals:** The following information should be included for each proposal:
  - (1) Name of the principal investigator and all co-investigators;
  - (2) Title of the grant proposal;
  - (3) Funding agency;
  - (4) Amount requested; and
  - (5) Candidate's proposed role and contribution.
- d. Generation of intellectual property:** List any patents issued or pending including patent number, date of filing, list of inventors, and status (provisional, non-provisional, issued).
- e. Major Work(s) in Progress:** The information provided here should comment on the nature of the work(s) and identify anticipated date of completion.
- f. Other Indicators of Scholarly Creative Work:** List book reviews, editorial contributions, citations, research awards, and other indicators of contributions to the discipline/profession, cited in the format of the discipline's style.

## 2. Teaching and Student Learning

Documentation in this section includes evidence of a commitment to teaching and learning, including:

- a. Student Evaluations of Teaching.** Student evaluation data should include summaries of teaching evaluations with comparative departmental/college data. Teaching effectiveness ratings should include all classes taught by untenured candidates. Candidates for

professor must include those classes taught in the last five years. Results should be summarized in a single table that includes evaluations for all courses taught and information about the instrument's items and response scale. In programs where individual classes, small studios, or performances are the norm, special care should be taken to assure full and comprehensive teaching evaluations.

- b. Undergraduate and Graduate Student Mentoring.** The candidate should describe role and duration of mentoring.
- c. Course and Program Development and/or Revision.** Information about course, curriculum, and program development can provide evidence of a commitment to student learning. The candidate's contribution to course development may be documented with sample course syllabi, teaching-grant proposal abstracts, courseware, cases and simulations, brief descriptions of student projects, examples of modifications for Instructional Television or Internet teaching, etc. Evidence of program development may include student recruitment, advising, and retention; directing graduate research; membership on or chairperson of dissertation or thesis committees; interdisciplinary program development, etc.
- d. Other Evidence of Teaching, Student Learning, and the Scholarship of Teaching.** Candidates may submit evidence that they have facilitated students' success. Examples may include contributions to students who have won awards, letters from community members who have benefited from student projects or internships, and other evidence that the candidate contributed to student learning. This section may also contain evidence of the candidate's commitment to enhancing his/her teaching ability including peer evaluation of teaching. Professional development activities, scholarly approaches to evaluating teaching effectiveness, teaching excellence awards, and guest lecturing or team teaching should also be documented here.

### 3. Service

The candidate should provide a complete listing of the categories below with dates of service and documentation as appropriate.

- a. Service to the Department, College, and University:** List committee membership, administrative roles, and other contributions to the department, college, and university.
- b. Service to the Profession/Academic Discipline:** Describe activities that strengthen the profession, including leadership in professional organizations.
- c. Service to the Community or Public:** Document public involvement that is related to the candidate's area of expertise, including speeches, expert advice, community engagement, creative or scholarly collaborations with public institutions and private organizations, etc.
- d. Service to State or National Organizations:** Document service on expert panels, advisory boards or state or federal granting, licensing, or oversight councils, boards or committees.
- e. Other Contributions:** The candidate may provide evidence of other significant contributions that advance the profession/discipline.