GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR WITH INDEFINITE TENURE\(^1\)

(Submit dossier on a flash drive)

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Revised December 1, 1993
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These Guidelines should be distributed to new faculty at the start of their first appointment in the college, to tenure-track faculty at the time of their third-year review, and to the tenured faculty in departments which are undertaking a tenure review. They are also available online at http://facultymeeting.arts.cornell.edu/meeting/AS__policies.cfm.

Criteria for promotion to the rank of associate professor with indefinite tenure:

The criteria for promotion to the rank of associate professor are based on excellence and potential in research\(^2\), teaching, and advising. Service to the department, college, university, and to the public and professional community is an additional criterion, but is of less importance than the quality of research, teaching and advising.

The candidate’s overall academic record should be of such accomplishment that the promotion will enhance the quality of the department. The college expects the candidate to present an exceptional record in research, teaching and advising, to rank very high compared to colleagues in the same field at similar stages in their careers at peer institutions, and to demonstrate the potential to become a leader in the field. The candidate’s research should be published in recognized journals or in books issued by reputable publishers.\(^3\) The candidate should demonstrate the ability to teach a range of courses, usually at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Performance outside the classroom in advising and in curricular innovation also is considered. Specific guidance developed by the candidate’s department about what constitutes an exceptional record in research, teaching and advising is provided in a separate document (“Guidelines for Promotion to the Rank of Associate Professor with Indefinite Tenure in the Department of ____”).\(^4\) Given the rigorous standards for tenure in the college and its departments, individuals whose performance has been adequate, or even good,

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1 These guidelines also apply to those who are externally hired as associate professor with tenure. See Appendix A for further guidance on hiring faculty with tenure.

2 For some departments (e.g., Music, Performing and Media Arts and English), creative and artistic accomplishments may be evaluated as the equivalent of research. Consult specific guidelines developed by the candidate’s department for details.

3 Candidates in the natural sciences, as well as other fields, may also be expected to have obtained external funding to support their research. Consult specific guidelines developed by the candidate’s department for details.

4 Department-specific guidelines (which must align with college and university standards), developed in consultation with and approved by the dean, will comport with standards at peer departments in other leading research universities and provide general indicators of expectations regarding the quantity and quality of research output as well as other indicators of academic or artistic achievement. In the realms of teaching, advising, and service, general guidance should also be provided regarding the expected levels of professional achievement and contribution.
might not receive promotion.

**Timing of the review:**

The review of tenure-track assistant professors for promotion to tenured associate professorships begins during the second semester of the fifth year since their original appointment. Basic steps in the review process are outlined below. Permission to proceed with a review, if the candidate wishes to be considered, must be obtained by the department chair in writing from the dean of the college. Permission to delay the review beyond the first term of the sixth year of appointment must also be secured from the dean.

The board of trustees reviews recommendations for promotions to tenured associate professorships at each of its four yearly meetings. Most of these promotions will carry a July 1 or January 1 effective date, but in some instances — e.g., in cases of early or delayed promotion — the promotion might become effective on November 1, February 1, or April 1.

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5 Exceptionally well-qualified candidates may be reviewed earlier with prior consent of the dean. Assistant professors with service at other colleges or universities may also be reviewed earlier if such an arrangement was made in consultation with the dean at the time of the individual’s hiring. Individuals reviewed early who fail to be tenured are entitled to the same two-semester terminal appointment following notification as those reviewed in their sixth year; the tenure decision resets the end of contract date. Time spent at the rank of instructor does not count as part of the probationary tenure period. Time spent on leave from Cornell, with or without salary, does count as time in rank, with the exception of parental leave, which automatically extends the tenure clock by one year.

6 The effective date of July 1 is used for promotions of individuals whose appointments began at the start of the academic year, while the January 1 date is used for those whose appointments coincide with the calendar year.
DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Introduction:

The following procedures are sequential. The discussion of each step contains essential points and is not meant to be comprehensive or to cover every possible circumstance. Departments may exercise flexibility in applying the procedures described in this document; significant deviations from the basic procedures, however, must be discussed with the dean and communicated in writing to the candidate prior to the start of the review process.7

A department’s periodic review of the strengths and weaknesses of its academic programs may lead to the conclusion that certain areas should be strengthened while other areas should be given lower priority or eliminated altogether. Such considerations are normally addressed before a search for a tenure-track appointment begins and/or before an assistant professor is renewed for a second, three-year tenure-track appointment. In exceptional circumstances, where a decision not to review for promotion based on a change of emphasis in academic programs or on the withdrawal of funding will affect incumbent assistant professors, a decision should be made no later than the fifth year of the candidate’s original tenure-track appointment. This decision may be appealed by following the University Procedures for Appealing a Decision Not to Conduct a Tenure Review at the End of the Ordinary Tenure Probation Period on the Basis of Factors Other Than the Candidate’s Merits:
http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/handbook/APPENDIX%204.pdf

The present document applies to cases in which a candidate’s merits are under consideration. These procedures have been developed to ensure a thorough, equitable review of candidates for tenure on their merits. A negative tenure decision may be appealed following procedures adopted by the Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees (hereafter referred to as Faculty Appeal Procedures) found at http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/handbook/APPENDIX%205.pdf

Basics Steps in the Review Process:

1) Meeting of the department chair and the candidate: A meeting of the chair and the candidate is held at the beginning of the second semester of the fifth year of probationary tenure. The candidate is told that the department’s tenured faculty plan to conduct a preliminary review of the tenure case. The departmental procedures are discussed and the candidate is given a copy of this document (the college’s guidelines for promotion) and the department’s guidelines. The candidate may wish to withdraw from tenure review, either before or after hearing the results of the preliminary review and, in most instances, the candidate who chooses not to stand for tenure is appointed to a terminal seventh year.8 If the candidate wishes to be considered, permission to proceed with a review for promotion to tenured associate professor must be obtained in writing from the dean of the college.

2) Preliminary tenure review by the tenured members of the department: Prior to the preliminary review, tenured faculty in the department are given a copy of this document (the college’s

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7 For example, departments with fewer than four tenured professors should devise special procedures to review a candidate for promotion to tenure. Such procedures should be discussed with the dean before initiating a review, and the candidate should be advised in writing.

8 A candidate who fails a review for tenure cannot be appointed to another (including non-tenure-track) academic position in the College.
guidelines for promotion) and the department’s guidelines. The form of the preliminary review is at the department’s discretion; however, such a review should provide an advisory recommendation on whether to proceed with a full tenure review. The preliminary review serves an important function, which is to give candidates a sense of the department's view of their chances for a successful tenure review, information that can help them decide whether or not to present themselves as candidates for tenure. If the result of the preliminary review is negative, the candidate will ordinarily be advised not to proceed and will be appointed for a terminal seventh year. Note that with one structural exception, any candidate who has passed the third year review has the right to stand for tenure with a full review if he or she so chooses.

3) **Full Review:** If a full review is to take place, the candidate is advised once again of special procedures and is given drafts of the form letters which the department will send to outside referees and students. The candidate must provide the department with his or her contributions to the dossier by the end of his or her fifth year (departments will provide candidates with a specific due date). The department will assemble additional materials for the full departmental review which will take place in the first semester of the candidate’s sixth year. In the case of candidates whose appointment is shared between the tenuring department and a program, the department chair and the program director must meet, once the candidate has submitted her or his contributions to the dossier, in order to establish the terms and timeline for the review.

Departments must establish a fixed date, consistent for all tenure reviews in the department, on which dossiers will be closed to contributions from candidates. (The fixed date must be no later than September 1 for faculty whose appointments began July 1, and January 1 for mid-year hires.) Candidates may add materials to the dossier up until this date. The completed dossier and departmental recommendation must be submitted to the dean by January 2 of the sixth year (or by August 31 for candidates whose appointments began with a calendar year). The dossier is to be submitted on a flash drive.

4) **Compiling the dossier:** The material to be collected includes:

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9 In some cases, the preliminary departmental review can be brief and based on the tenured faculty’s knowledge of the candidate’s accomplishments; in other cases, the department may wish to assemble a brief dossier which includes some outside letters or teaching evaluations. If the department chooses to solicit the opinions of outside referees at this time, the procedures outlined in section 4 (b) Compiling the Dossier must be followed.

10 As noted in the Faculty Handbook, “The appointment of a faculty member for a definite term may be terminated for reasons involving staffing patterns, the decline in relevance of a research area to the mission of the department, or lack of funds.” See above (INTRODUCTION).

11 These draft letters do not contain names of potential referees or the names of scholars to whom reviewers will be asked to compare the candidate. Rather, it is a generic letter inviting external referees to comment on the candidate’s scholarship and standing in the field. Referees should be told that while the candidate is invited to submit names of potential referees, he or she will not have access to the letters that the referees provide.

12 Once the dossier is closed to contributions from the candidate, it is ready to be made available to external referees. Certain items related to the contents of the closed dossier — e.g., a letter from a journal informing the candidate that a paper submitted for publication has been accepted — may subsequently be submitted to the department and included among the additional materials the department considers in its review process. All such subsequent additions are for internal consideration only; they are not to be provided to external referees. External referees should be asked to evaluate a single, determinate body of materials, namely, those provided by the candidate prior to the closing of the dossier.
a) Table of contents

b) Written assessments of the candidate’s qualifications for promotion from recognized outside experts. The candidate is invited to provide:

i) A list of potential referees
ii) An optional, separate list of scholars in the field who, the candidate believes, for either personal or professional reasons, might not write with objectivity and/or impartiality.\(^{13}\)

The department also independently constructs its own relatively large list of potential referees which should not be discussed with the candidate. All three lists (the candidates’ two lists and the department’s list) constitute a permanent part of the dossier.\(^{14}\)

The dossier must contain at least seven letters from external referees. At least five of these letters should be written by referees from the department’s list of potential referees.\(^{15}\)

Letters to external referees requesting an assessment of the candidate should ask referees:

aa.) To indicate whether they have any current or prior collaborative or supervisory associations with the candidate — e.g., as on a research project or as a coauthor, or as a former teacher, advisor, or PhD director. External associations of these sorts do not disqualify referees from offering their assessment of the candidate as long as they are clearly identified, since departments may well seek views informed by close collaborations of these sorts, as part of a well-rounded dossier. At least five letters, however, should be from peers outside Cornell who have not been closely associated with the candidate.

bb.) To provide comparisons with scholars in the field at comparable stages in their careers, naming such scholars if particular comparisons would be helpful.

cc.) To indicate whether, on the basis of the materials provided to them in the dossier, they think the candidate should be granted tenure at Cornell.

Obtaining written assessments from faculty in other departments at Cornell may be

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\(^{13}\) If the department elects to write to scholars on the candidate’s second list, the resultant letters should be weighed in light of the candidate’s noted objections.

\(^{14}\) The candidate’s list and the department’s list might, in many fields, contain considerable overlap. The chair’s covering letter should explain why this is so.

\(^{15}\) Letters written by referees should be identified as being selected by the candidate, by the department, or by both, either in the chair’s covering letter or on a page preceding the external referees’ letters. The chair should also provide brief biographies showing the referees’ credentials.
appropriate, but departments should exercise discretion in soliciting opinions from Cornell colleagues because authors of letters of recommendation are excluded from service on the candidate’s ad hoc committee.

c) A list of graduate students (and/or postdoctoral associates) whose research has been supervised by the candidate

d) A statement from the chair and/or graduate field representative and/or director of undergraduate education assessing the candidate’s effectiveness as an advisor for graduate and undergraduate students

e) Letters from both undergraduate and graduate students (and/or postdoctoral associates) assessing the candidate’s effectiveness as teacher and adviser:

   i) A sampling of students from a variety of courses should be asked to write letters expressing their candid, confidential opinions of the candidate’s teaching ability.
   ii) Letters solicited from the candidate’s advisees assessing the candidate’s effectiveness as an adviser (a list of advisees may be obtained from the Academic Advising Center)
   iii) The dossier may also include evaluations by teaching assistants and graduate students of the candidate’s teaching and advising/mentoring ability

f) Sample letters of solicitation sent to graduate and undergraduate students

g) A list of students whose views are solicited

h) A statement of how student evaluators were selected, the rate of response, and the usual rate of response in the department

i) A list of courses taught since appointment, with enrollments

j) A summary of course evaluations and student opinion prepared by someone other than the candidate including data on how the candidate’s evaluations compare to those of other faculty teaching the same or similar courses

k) Evaluation of the candidate's teaching by the chair, the director of undergraduate studies, or a faculty committee that visits colleagues' classes, based on observations of the candidate's courses and review of course materials (syllabi, reading lists, handouts, non-print materials, problem sets, assignments, graded exams, student research papers, final projects, final grade distribution, examples of written feedback to students)

l) A review (if appropriate) of the candidate’s external research support

\footnote{Departments which compile statistical information on teaching should provide an explanation of the numbers, e.g., departmental mean scores. Departments which use the college’s on-line course evaluation system may include the system’s summary reports for the candidate’s courses, but should still comment on these in the context of departmental norms.}
m) A statement written by the candidate containing a review of past accomplishments and plans for the future. This statement should cover research, teaching and advising at undergraduate and graduate levels, and service to the department, college, and university. Public and external professional service may be included. Teaching and advising information should include:

i) Courses assigned or developed and course materials (for example, syllabi, handouts, assignments, problem sets, graded work)

ii) Comments on teaching (goals, approaches, pedagogic techniques adopted or invented, successes, problems) and results of student learning assessment efforts in selected courses

iii) A brief statement from the candidate about her/his goals for and success in advising

iv) Independent studies and graduate students supervised

v) Plans for future teaching — needs of undergraduate and graduate students, and plans for courses

n) A complete curriculum vitae which includes educational background, citations of all professional publications; 17 outside research funding (amount and period of support); awards; invited lectures; courses taught; service on department, college, and university committees; outside professional activities

o) Copies of publications and reviews (if available) of these publications; readers’ reports from presses may be submitted; works-in-progress may be submitted

p) A copy of the third-year review letter to the candidate

q) In the case of candidates whose appointment is shared between the tenuring department and a program, a letter from the program director summarizing the recommendations of program faculty

5) Discussion of the dossier with the candidate: Before the dossier is closed to contributions from the candidate, the chair should consult with the candidate about the materials she or he has provided. The chair may suggest additions or changes to these materials.

6) Review by tenured members of the department: This review by tenured members of the department can take various forms. 18 The dossier must be available to all faculty taking part in the review and must be present at the meeting(s) where the candidate’s promotion is discussed. The college requires that the opinion of every tenured faculty member in the department be sought. 19

17 Some candidates might wish to exclude some publications from the dossier. The department might or might not honor such a request. The eventual dossier should contain a notation that a request was made and whether or not it was honored.

18 For example, in some departments the review of the dossier is conducted by a small committee which then presents its findings at a meeting of tenured faculty. The department should ensure, however, that its practices are consistent and unprejudiced from case to case.

19 Faculty on leave may wish not to participate in the tenure review if they are insufficiently informed of the deliberations within the department; their decisions not to participate should be noted in the final tally. All other tenured faculty are expected to attend the meeting at which the candidate’s qualifications are discussed, to vote yay, nay, or formally abstain, and to provide a written explanation of this vote in a letter to the department chair.
that a meeting of tenured faculty be held to discuss the candidate’s qualifications, and that a vote by secret ballot of the tenured faculty be obtained and recorded. Those faculty participating in the tenure review but who cannot attend the meeting of tenured faculty must submit advisory votes before the meeting, accompanied by a rationale, which is to be read at the meeting to further discussion of the case.

7) Faculty letters explaining the vote: All faculty who vote (yay, nay, or abstain), including those unable to attend the tenure meeting (unless they are on leave and have chosen not to participate), must subsequently send a letter to the department chair providing the substantive reasons for their votes. Faculty letters should not introduce substantive reasons for or against tenure that have not been introduced and made available for discussion in the department meeting(s) devoted to discussion of the tenure case.20

8) Statement to the candidate on the outcome of the review: The candidate is given a written statement in which the chair summarizes the reasons for the department’s decision. A positive decision will be forwarded to the dean. The candidate may appeal a negative decision following the Faculty Appeal Procedures at the University Faculty website http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/handbook/APPENDIX%205.pdf

9) Chair’s letter: The chair must supply a covering letter that will accompany the completed tenure dossier. The chair’s cover letter must present the department’s recommendation including a report of the formal department vote on the case, distinguishing votes cast at the meeting from advisory votes cast by faculty members not in attendance at the meeting. It should summarize the procedures used, noting in particular any special procedures set in place by the department. The letter should summarize the outside referees’ opinions, speak to special circumstances that might have influenced their opinions, give a brief description of their qualifications and standing, and identify any potential conflicts of interest. If a large number of outside letters have been obtained, the descriptions of the qualifications and standing of the referees can be limited to those whose letters are particularly significant. The chair’s letter must provide an overview of the important points that arose in the department’s review.

Before submitting the dossier to the dean, the chair’s letter should be made available to the tenured members of the department for review. The purpose of this review is to allow tenured members to verify that the letter accurately reports the department’s proceedings and deliberations. The letter should not be disseminated in any form to tenured faculty but it should remain in the chair’s office at all times and be made available for viewing there. The chair may then revise the letter in light of comments received from tenured members of the department.

In addition to writing a covering letter for the tenure dossier, the chair is required to provide his or her own judgment on the case. This may be done in an appendix to the chair’s cover letter which is clearly distinct from the chair’s account of the department’s proceedings and deliberations and marked as the chair’s own assessment, or in a separate letter. If it is included with the chair’s cover letter, it should not be made available to the tenured members of the department for review along with the rest of the chair’s letter.

10) Submitting the dossier to the dean: Both positive and negative decisions are transmitted in

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20 If the chair finds that individual faculty letters introduce new arguments, he or she should ask the relevant faculty member(s) to submit new letters omitting the illicit material. Any such material that remains in individual faculty letters when the dossier is submitted should be clearly identified by the chair.
writing to the dean. The dossier (including all the materials specified in Section 4: COMPILING THE DOSSIER), the letters from faculty received by the chair’s established deadline, and the chair’s letter must be submitted to the dean’s office by the specified date. Letters from faculty will be treated with the same confidentiality as all other letters in the dossier.

11) Action by the dean:

a) Upon receipt of a positive departmental recommendation, the dean will appoint an ad hoc committee composed of three tenured faculty (at least two of whom are members of the college faculty) to review the dossier and advise whether promotion should ensue.\(^{21}\) The dean will return the dossier to the department only if serious procedural or substantive defects are found. Very few dossiers will be returned to the department if the procedures outlined above are followed carefully. The dean will reach a decision on the case after receipt of the ad hoc committee’s recommendation.\(^{22}\) In complex cases, the dean may convene the Dean’s Advisory Committee on Appointments.\(^{23}\)

i) If the dean’s decision is positive, it will be reviewed by the university-level Faculty Advisory Committee on Tenure Appointments (FACTA). FACTA is advisory to the provost. The dean may reaffirm or change his or her decision after consulting with the provost.

ii) If a dean reaches a preliminary decision to deny tenure to a non-tenured faculty member whose promotion to tenure has been recommended by his or her department, the dean within three weeks of that decision furnishes the candidate and the department with a preliminary written statement of the reasons for that decision and the nature of the evidence within the limits set by the need to preserve confidentiality. For a two-week period following receipt of the dean’s statement, the candidate and/or department has the opportunity to respond to the dean. If, following this response, the dean is not persuaded to change the decision to deny tenure, the dean forwards the file, together with an explanation for the decision, to the provost. If the provost does not have any concern or reservation about the dean’s proposed decision, she or he informs the college dean, and the decision becomes final and subject to appeal. If the provost does have a concern or reservation, she or he forwards the file to FACTA, for consideration at a meeting of the full committee, following the procedures used by the committee in cases following positive recommendations by the dean. After receiving FACTA’s recommendation, the provost consults with the dean. Until the dean has received a response from the provost, the dean’s decision remains provisional. The University Level Appeal Procedure (appendix five of the University Faculty Handbook or available at the University Faculty website

\(^{21}\) The primary function of an ad hoc committee is to ensure, judging from the materials in the dossier, that the department has followed college and university procedures in a rigorous and reasonable fashion, and has upheld the standard of excellence we require of tenured professors at Cornell.

\(^{22}\) The dean’s decision usually takes place approximately eight weeks after the dossier has been submitted by the department; delays, however, can and do occur.

\(^{23}\) The Dean’s Advisory Committee on Appointments is an elected body composed of tenured faculty in the college who represent constituencies in the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences and mathematics. The committee reviews the dossier prepared by the department, the report of the ad hoc committee, and any additional materials before meeting as a group to discuss the case and advise the dean on its merits.
b) *If the department’s recommendation is negative*, the dean can either
i) accept the department’s findings; or
ii) appoint an *ad hoc* committee to review the dossier; or
iii) convene the Dean’s Advisory Committee on Appointments.

If, however, the candidate has appealed a negative departmental decision and the department has reaffirmed its negative assessment, then the dean, at the candidate’s request, must appoint an *ad hoc* committee. If, following receipt of the *ad hoc* and/or advisory committee’s recommendation, the dean’s decision is positive, the department and the candidate are informed and a recommendation for promotion is made by the dean to the provost and will be reviewed by FACTA. If there are no concerns or reservations, the provost will forward a positive tenure decision to the president for presentation to the board of trustees. If the recommendation of FACTA is that the dean reverse his or her decision and deny tenure, the provost will consult with the dean. If the dean’s final decision remains positive, the provost will decide whether a positive recommendation will be presented to the trustees. If the dean’s final decision is negative, the department and the candidate are informed and the decision becomes subject to the Faculty Appeal Procedures (http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/pdfs/NEGUTENUREDDECISION.pdf) The final decision regarding tenure is made by the trustees. The decisions of the provost and of the trustees are not subject to appeal.24

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24 A reminder about the university RECORDS RETENTION POLICY: The college is the designated repository of tenure or promotion dossiers; they are to be retained for 3 years beyond the date on which the trustees approve the decision to tenure or promote a candidate, or 3 years from the end of a term appointment following a decision to deny tenure. DEPARTMENTS should not retain the review materials beyond the final notification of the outcome of the review. The departmental copy of materials provided by the candidate should be returned to the candidate and the remainder of the dossier should be destroyed (exception: departments may keep a copy of course evaluations/summaries for future use).]
APPENDIX A
Hiring Faculty as Associate Professor with Tenure

Before any formal offer of appointment at the rank of associate professor with tenure is authorized by the college, the department must submit clear evidence of the tenurability of the proposed candidate, including external letters solicited by the department and expressly addressing the candidate’s tenurability. However, in certain cases – e.g., when the candidate’s tenurability is strongly evident to the dean by her or his curriculum vitae, or when the time needed for the collection of letters might endanger the appointment – this requirement may be waived by the dean. Even in such instances, however, tenure is not awarded until it is formally approved (following a normal review process) by the Board of Trustees.

All faculty hired at the rank of associate professor with tenure must undergo a full tenure review as described in these Guidelines. In the optimal case, there will be sufficient time between the offer of appointment and the start date of the appointment for the tenure review to be completed before the faculty member takes up his or her appointment. In other cases, the tenure review will be conducted during the first year of the appointment, with the implication that the new faculty member will not have tenure at Cornell until the review is completed with a positive result.