GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF PROFESSOR¹
(Submit dossier on a flash drive)
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Adopted October 16, 1989
Revised May 15, 2013, effective with the Fall Semester, 2013

Criteria for promotion to the rank of professor: The criteria for promotion to the rank of professor are based on excellence and potential in research² and teaching/advising and a judgment on whether the individual has fulfilled the promise on which tenure was originally granted. Service to the department, college, university, and to the public and professional community is a further criterion but is of lesser import than the quality of research, teaching and advising.

The candidate’s overall academic record should establish continued achievement since the conferral of tenure. The college expects the candidate to present an exceptional record in research, teaching and advising, to rank very high when compared to colleagues in the same field at similar states in their careers at peer institutions, and to be a leader in the field. The candidate’s research should be published in recognized scholarly 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.

Timing of the review: Associate professors holding tenured positions are reviewed for promotion to full professorships as early as the beginning of the second semester of the fifth year or as late as the first semester of the sixth year after the conferral of tenure.⁴ Basic steps in the review process are outlined below. Permission to proceed with the review must be obtained in writing from the dean of the college. If, at the candidate’s request or because the department’s recommendation is negative, the review is delayed, then the department chair, in consultation with the candidate, should establish a definite timetable for further review, as described below.⁵

¹ These guidelines also apply to those who are externally hired as professor with tenure. Obtaining extensive documentation on externally hired faculty may prove difficult, but departments should try to assemble a thorough dossier, e.g., one which resembles as closely as possible a dossier prepared for an internal promotion.
² As appropriate, some departments (e.g. music, performing and media arts, English) should establish and provide the candidate with written guidelines whereby creative and artistic accomplishments are evaluated as the equivalent of research.
³ Candidates in the natural sciences also should have obtained external funding to support their research.
⁴ Exceptionally well-qualified candidates may be reviewed earlier with prior consent of the dean. Associate 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. Time spent on leave from Cornell, with or without salary, counts as time in rank.
⁵ These procedures are meant to ensure that a review will take place no later than the ninth year after promotion to tenure. While promotion to professor is by no means automatic, the college expects that most faculty will be promoted by or before their tenth year in rank.
The effective date for promotions to full professorships is either July 1 or January 1; to be reviewed in time to meet those dates, the dossier must be received in the dean’s office by March 1 or September 1, respectively. Changes in title cannot be made retroactively, but in unusual circumstances, e.g., in those cases where the promotion is delayed by circumstances beyond either the department’s or the candidate’s control, salary increases can be made retroactively to the beginning of the term.

DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTION TO THE RANK OF 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.6

Differences may arise between the candidate and the department at several points in the promotion process. Mechanisms to resolve these differences have not been instituted by the college; rather, common sense, goodwill, and professional courtesy are assumed to prevail. The dean’s office is willing to help reach resolutions. If a full review concludes with a negative decision, a formal appeal may be lodged following procedures adopted by the university’s faculty council of representatives and the board of trustees (hereafter referred to as Faculty Appeals Procedures). http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/pdfs/PROMTOFULLPROF.pdf

Basic steps in the review process:

1. Meeting of the department chair and the candidate: A meeting of the chair and the candidate is held in the second semester of the fifth year or the first semester of the sixth year after promotion to tenure. The candidate is told that the department’s full professors plan to conduct a preliminary review to determine whether to undertake a full review. The departmental procedures are discussed, and, especially if the procedures deviate from these basic guidelines, the candidate is given a copy of the department’s and the college’s guidelines for promotion. The candidate may wish to postpone the review, in which case the chair will consult the full professors and the candidate the following year.

6 For example, departments with fewer than four tenured full professors should devise special procedures to review a candidate for promotion to the rank of full professor. Such procedures should be discussed with the dean before initiating a review, and the candidate should be advised in writing.
Preliminary review by the full professors of the department. The form of the preliminary review is at the department’s discretion; however, convincing evidence must be presented that a full review should or should not be undertaken. When the preliminary review results in a decision to proceed with a full review, permission to proceed must be requested and received in writing from the dean. If a full review is to take place, the candidate is advised once again of special procedures which will pertain and is given drafts of the form letters to be sent to outside referees and students.

According to the Faculty Handbook: “If the full professors decide not to initiate a review, the chair will discuss their decision with the candidate. If the candidate is in the sixth or later year in rank, he or she may request a formal review at that time, and this wish will be granted automatically. If the candidate agrees to a postponement, the chairperson will, at the beginning of the following year, consult the full professors and the candidate again, and initiate a formal review unless the candidate requests that the review be postponed. If the candidate has not been reviewed at least once after serving as an associate professor for seven years, the chair will consult the candidate at least triennially and will initiate a formal review unless the candidate does not want one. If a department chairperson is an associate professor and is subject to a review, it is the responsibility of the dean to conduct the discussions or to assign the responsibility to a senior member of the department.

If a candidate has received a formal review that has not culminated in a recommendation of promotion, the candidate may, after two or more years have elapsed, request a second review, and this request will be granted. (If the first review was unsuccessfully appealed, the two years are measured from the time of the appeal committee’s decision.) There is no upper limit to the time a faculty member may serve in the rank of associate professor.”

It is college policy, however, that if a faculty member is not promoted after ten years in rank, the case should be discussed with the dean.

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7 In some cases, the preliminary departmental review can be brief and based on the full professors’ knowledge of the candidate’s accomplishments; in other cases, the department may wish to assemble a brief dossier which includes some outside letters and/or teaching evaluations. If the department chooses to solicit the opinions of outside referees at this time, the procedures outlined in section 3.b below must be followed.

8 These draft letters do not contain names of potential referees or the names of scholars to whom the candidate is to be compared. 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.

9 The Faculty Handbook contains a brief discussion of “Promotion to Full professor” including these 2 paragraphs—select this heading from the table of contents at http://www.theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/handbook/toc.html
(3) **Compiling the dossier for a formal review.** In most cases, the review is based primarily on post-tenure materials. The dossier should include the following:

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. The department also constructs a relatively large list of potential referees which should not be discussed with the candidate. All three lists constitute a permanent part of the dossier.

Letters to external referees requesting an assessment of the candidate should ask for comparisons with scholars in the field at comparable stages in their careers, naming such scholars if particular comparisons would be helpful. The dossier must contain at least seven letters from external referees. At least five of these letters should be written by referees selected by the department. Obtaining written assessments from faculty in other departments at Cornell may be appropriate, but departments should exercise discretion in soliciting opinions from Cornell colleagues because the authors of letters included in the dossier 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 or DUS/DGS assessing the candidate’s effectiveness as an adviser for graduate and undergraduate students

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

10 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.

11 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.

12 Letters written by referees selected by the candidate, by the department, and by both should be so identified either in the chair’s covering letter or on a page preceding the external referees’ letters. The chair should also provide brief biographies or a statement on the referees’ credentials.
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 undergraduate 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 receiving tenure, with enrollments

j) Course evaluations obtained since the time of the candidate’s promotion to associate professor

k) 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

l) Assessment of the candidate’s teaching by the chair, the director of undergraduate/graduate studies, or members of 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)

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

n) A statement written by the candidate containing a review of past accomplishments and plans for the future. This statement should cover

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13 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.
research, teaching and advising at undergraduate and graduate levels (as detailed below), and service to the department, college, and university. Public and external professional service may be included.

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

o) A complete curriculum vitae which includes educational background; citations of all professional publication,\(^1\)\(^4\) outside research funding (amount and period of support); awards; invited lecturers; courses taught; department, college, and university committees; outside professional activities

p) Copies of publications and reviews (if available) of these publications. Works-in-progress may be submitted

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\(^{(4)}\) Discussion of the dossier with the candidate: Before the dossier is considered by the department’s full professors, the chair informs the candidate of the department’s progress in gathering materials.\(^1\)\(^5\)

\(^{(5)}\) Review by the department’s full professors: This review by the department’s full professors can take various forms.\(^1\)\(^6\) The dossier must be available to all faculty

\(^1\)\(^4\) 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.

\(^1\)\(^5\) The candidate may be told how many referees have written letters, but the identity of those who have written (or not written) should remain confidential. The chair may reveal the general tone of the referees’ letters but care must be given to preserve the confidentiality of their individual opinions.
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
full professor in the department be sought,\(^\text{17}\) that a meeting of full professors be
held to discuss the candidate’s qualifications, and that a vote by secret ballot of
the full professors be obtained and recorded. All faculty who vote (yay, nay, or
abstain), including those unable to attend the tenure meeting (unless they are on
leave), must subsequently send a letter to the department chair providing the
substantive reasons for their votes. Those who cannot attend the meeting 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. All letters from faculty
received by the chair’s established deadline will be included in the dossier
submitted to the dean and will be treated with the same confidentiality as all other
letters in the dossier.

(6) 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 procedures described in
the Faculty Appeals Procedures.
http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/pdfs/PROMTOFULLPROF.pdf

(7) Submitting the dossier to the dean: Both positive and negative decisions are
transmitted in writing to the dean. The chair’s covering letter should include:

a) A numeric record of the department vote, including abstentions and an
 explanation for abstentions and negative votes; if the chair’s vote differs
 from the department vote, the chair may attach a separate letter.

b) A summary of 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, and give a brief description of their qualifications
 and standing. 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

\(^{16}\) For example, in some departments the review is conducted by a small committee which then presents its findings
at a meeting of the full professors. The department should ensure, however, that its practices are consistent and
unprejudiced from case to case.

\(^{17}\) Faculty on leave may wish not to vote if they are insufficiently informed of the deliberations within the
department; their abstentions should be noted in the final tally.
review and a summary of the faculty letters received, noting any new points that come up in them. All letters from faculty will be included in the dossier and will be treated with the same confidentiality as all other letters in the dossier.

c) Comment on quality of journals, presses, and other venues where the candidate’s work has appeared

d) Assessment of candidate’s contributions to co-authored publications, explaining conventions of the field in listing authors

e) Candidate’s role in the department and in allied departments or disciplines

f) Candidate’s teaching strengths and weaknesses; comment on efforts to improve instruction

g) Candidate’s scholarly achievement and promise

h) Reasons for early or late promotion, if applicable

(8) Action by the dean: Upon receipt of a positive recommendation, the dean will appoint an ad hoc committee composed of two full professors (at least one of whom is a member of the college faculty) to review the dossier and advise whether promotion should ensue. 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. In complex cases, the dean may convene the advisory committee on appointments.

If the department’s recommendation is negative, the dean can either a) accept the department’s findings; or b) appoint an ad hoc committee to review the dossier. In complex cases, the dean also may convene the 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.

18 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.

19 The advisory committee on appointments is an elected body composed of tenured faculty in the college who represent constituencies in the humanities, social sciences, and natural 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.
If 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 the president. If the dean’s decision is negative, the department and candidate are informed. The candidate and/or the department may appeal the dean’s decision following the procedures outlined in the Faculty Appeals Procedures.
http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/pdfs/PROMTOFULLPROF.pdf

(9) Disposal of the promotion dossier. At the conclusion of any tenure case (including, where relevant, the conclusion of the appeals process), departments should not retain a copy of the dossier. According to the university policy on retention of university records, the Office of the Dean of the College is the proper custodian for all such materials and the preservation of confidentiality is best served by this policy.