

Administrator and Staff Engagement in the Promotion and/or Tenure Review Process

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PennState

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR FACULTY AFFAIRS

Today's Topics

- Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
- Tenure and/or Promotion Policies and Processes
- Impact of COVID-19 on the tenure and/or promotion process
- Q&A



VPFA Website – vpfa.psu.edu



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COVID-19 Information for Faculty

Visit Penn State's official [Coronavirus Information page](#) and our [COVID-19 Resources for Faculty page](#).

Read the latest pandemic-related [University news stories](#).

Review the content in the "[News for Faculty and Instructors](#)" [Digest emails](#).

Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

[Kathleen Bieschke](#), a former Department Head in the College of Education and Professor of Education in Counseling Psychology, is the [University's Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs](#).

The Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs works closely with the [Executive Vice President and Provost](#) in areas including faculty development, leadership training, promotion and tenure, executive searches and reviews, and other issues related to academic personnel and their concerns. The Vice Provost also serves as the Provost's contact person for the [Big Ten Academic Alliance](#), the academic arm of the Big Ten Conference, and the [University Faculty Senate](#) in issues relating to faculty affairs, and is the liaison for the Provost and [President](#) to University deans and chancellors.



PENN STATE FACULTY AFFAIRS NEWS



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Policy AC23

- “Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations”
- Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs is steward of AC23
- Website for University policies: policies.psu.edu



P&T Process Reminders

- **Recognize our goal:** To have a faculty appropriate to a major research university, with a commitment to teaching, research and service, so that the internal and external reputations of each unit are constantly improving.
- **Respectful, civil, and thoughtful disagreements and deliberations** are to be expected, and they are part of a healthy, academic discourse.
- **Understand our system of checks and balances**, with independent but mutually informed recommendations by faculty peers and administrators.



Administrative Guidelines

- How we operationalize AC23
- A comprehensive document with some changes made each academic year
- Important to know about AC23 and the guidelines –at vpfa.psu.edu



Impact of COVID-19 and Other Events of 2020

- *Changes to P&T Administrative Guidelines and FAQs*
- *Guidance documents*
 - [Guidance for administrators and members of P&T committees for 2022-2023](#)
 - [Guidance for promotion and tenure narratives for 2022-2023](#)
 - [Guidance on the assessment of teaching effectiveness 2023](#)
- *For tenure-line faculty in their probationary period in calendar year 2020:*
 - [Guidance regarding a one-year extension due to COVID-19](#)
 - [FAQs pertaining to the guidance](#)
 - [COVID extension fact sheet \(June 2022\)](#)



Charge

- A [Recommended Charge to Promotion and Tenure Committees](#) can be found on the VPFA website
 - Familiar with unit and university p&t documents
 - Determine the meeting modality at the first meeting
 - Declare conflicts of interest
 - May only vote if present for discussion
 - Maintain confidentiality about deliberations
 - Consultation must occur if disagreeing with previous review
 - Review to focus on unit criteria: confine review to contents of dossier and work with the relevant administrator to obtain needed information
 - Every level of review must have access to the same information; additions to dossier due no later than 2/1/22
 - Committee members should give due consideration to disciplinary experts



Charge items specific to level of review

- **Level One: Department/School/Campus.** Evaluation of all criteria in light of unit guidelines
- **Level Two: College/Campus.** Evaluation in light of college/campus criteria and expectations, equity, procedural fairness
- **Level Three: University.** University criteria, equity within and among colleagues, and procedural fairness.



COVID-19 Guidance for First Level of Review

- Consider the specific impacts COVID-19 has presented within a faculty member's discipline as well as within a faculty member's research program or creative practice.
- Discuss within the committee challenges candidates may have faced.
- Committees at the first level review are asked to acknowledge such challenges were taken into consideration in their evaluation letters.
- If the committee does not have specific knowledge of the candidate's discipline, they should consult Section III.C.9 of the Administrative Guidelines for guidance on how to seek this expertise.
- See [Guidance for administrators and members of P&T committees for 2022-2023](#)



COVID-Specific Charge Items

- Recognize that events of 2020/21 had differential impact on faculty
- External reviewers were asked to be mindful about how the events of 2020/2021 might influence achievement and trajectory
- Consider specific impacts with a faculty candidate's discipline, research program, or creative practice.
- Be aware the delivery of instruction and assessment of teaching effectiveness were affected.
- Be familiar with adjustments to the P&T process due to COVID.
- Consider that the impact of events in 2020/2021 might extend backwards and forward.



The Importance of the Dossier



THE DOSSIER

The dossier paints a vital picture – especially for the University Committee, Provost, and President – and has many key components.



Key Components of the Dossier

- Narrative statement
- Separate sections of the dossier should focus on accomplishments in three areas: **Teaching, Research, and Service** (and **Patient Care** and **Librarianship**, as appropriate).
- **What should not be part of the dossier?** Statements about the candidate's personal life, the actual CV, sample of publications, course outlines, letters of thanks or appreciation.



Key Components of the Narrative

- Per the administrative guidelines, “the purpose of the narrative statement is not so much to call attention to achievements that are listed elsewhere in the dossier as it is to afford candidates the opportunity to place their work and activities in the context of their overall goals and agendas.”
- Updated guidance for the narrative statement due to COVID can be found [here](#) on the VPFA website.
- Candidates are encouraged (but not required) to describe how the events of 2020/21 (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic, societal/racial tensions, political unrest) impacted their work, and the steps they took to manage these impacts, in the narrative that accompanies their dossier for promotion and/or tenure.
- Candidates are encouraged to work closely with their department/division/school head, chief academic officer, or director of academic affairs to develop their narrative statements.
- **Regarding the length of the narrative,** *“We encourage candidates to be as succinct as possible. The narrative statement should not exceed 2,000 words; this word length will be reduced to 1600 words when there are no candidates pursuing tenure who were in their probationary period in calendar year 2020.”*



Responsibility for the Dossier

- *FAQ#3: Who is responsible for the preparation of the dossier?*

That responsibility is assigned to the **academic unit head**, and the faculty member must cooperate by assembling whatever materials are in their possession by the timeline given by the academic unit head. If the unit is using Activity Insight to generate the dossier, faculty members are responsible for ensuring their information is entered into Activity Insight in accordance with the timeline specified.



Dossier Reminders

- Signatory pages must be accurate and complete. Don't forget this part!
 - We are moving in the direction of e-signatures.
- Ensure the dossier leaves the academic unit in pristine condition.
- Use **current promotion and tenure forms**, available for download from GURU at <http://guru.psu.edu/forms/4-21PromotionandTenureForms.html> OR create promotion and tenure forms by using Activity Insight's Permanent Data screen and running the 'Promotion and Tenure Report.'



Dossier Reminders

- Research should span faculty member's entire career.
- Materials for teaching and service:
 - **For tenure review:** include materials from the date of Penn State employment in a tenure-eligible position.
 - **For promotion review:** may choose to report information about teaching and service for up to 10 of the most recent consecutive years since the last successful formal review.

Dossier Reminders

Teaching

- A summary of student comments should be provided.
- Peer reviews and advising surveys are to be included as parts of the dossier. Candidates have access to this material.
- Be familiar with the Guidance on the [Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness 2023](#).

Dossier Reminders: Alternate Assessments

	Spring/summer 2020	Beginning in academic year 2020-2021
Two-year review	N/A	One alternate assessment is required*
Four-year review	N/A	One alternate assessment is required*
Six-year review	N/A	One alternate assessment is required*
Promotion to Full Professor	N/A	One alternate assessment is required*
Non-tenure-line promotions	N/A	One alternate assessment is required*

Alternate assessments from previous years of review should remain unchanged in the dossier.

Dossier Reminders

Research/Creative Accomplishments

- Do not include works in progress and grants not funded for sixth year and promotion dossiers.
- Candidates are not expected to have an entry in every category

Service

- Candidates are not expected to have an entry in every category
- Entries may only appear in one category

External Letters

- We must have four external letters.
- External letters should come from people who can give honest and objective evaluations.
- Use judgment and discretion regarding all external letters.
- There should be no contact between the candidate and the reviewer. If a reviewer contacts a candidate, that candidate should immediately contact his or her department head, director of academic affairs, or school director.
- Advance contacts to potential reviewers should go through the dean or chancellor, the department head, the director of academic affairs, or the school director.
- Letters should not reference external reviewers by name or other descriptors that could reveal the person's identity, such as the institution where that person works.
- Include a log and list only those who received all materials.



COVID Impact on Requests for External Letters

- The “Sample Letters to External Evaluators” was updated with new language as of April 6, 2021 and will be maintained until there are no longer any candidates for tenure who were in the probationary period during calendar year 2020. See Appendix C.
- Additions include: reference to the Extension to the Probationary Period, encouragement to candidates to reflect the impact of COVID-19 in their narrative, and directives to ignore the length of the probationary period.



Statements of Evaluation

- For tenure decisions, include all prior evaluative letters beginning with the earliest provisional review.
 - Include the names and ranks of committee members in the letter. Review committees should have at least three members.
- Vote totals should be included in the first paragraph of the letter.
- **For split votes,**
 - Include majority and minority views in the letter
 - Tie votes are equivalent to “no” votes
- If a consultation occurs, include details of that in the letter.
- Be consistent in the use of descriptors related to teaching, research, and service.
 - Per Appendix A.C. of the Administrative Guidelines, the following descriptors must be used to make a judgment of the candidate’s teaching: Excellent, very good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory
- For Joint Appointments, a letter from the secondary department head is required.



Consultation

- Is required when there is a potential for disagreement between the current level of review and the previous level of review.
- Initiating a consultation does not mean there will be a disagreement.
- If a consultation occurs, it must be documented within the letter.



Stays of Tenure

- Faculty members granted stays of tenure or leave may include additional evaluations beyond five years to provide sufficient evidence of evaluations or teaching assessment.
- No discussion of stays should appear in the dossiers.
- Stays are given for legitimate reasons and vetted through my office; length of probationary period is irrelevant to the judgement being made.
 - From letter to external reviewers: Recognizing the disruption to the scholarly, instructional, and service activities of faculty members due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest in spring 2020, Penn State provided candidates for promotion and tenure the option to extend their tenure clock by one year. Candidates for promotion and tenure may also receive additional stays of the tenure clock according to university policy. Our policy states that the criteria for promotion and tenure at The Pennsylvania State University are the same for all faculty members regardless of length of service during the probationary period.



Extension to the Probationary Period Due to COVID-19

Penn State extended the provisional tenure period starting with the 2020-2021 academic year for all faculty in their pre-tenure probationary period, as defined in University policy AC23. As of September 15, 2020, the University announced that all tenure-line faculty in their probationary period during the calendar year 2020 are eligible to confirm acceptance of the one-year COVID-19 extension.

See [Guidance for Extension of the Probationary Period Due to COVID-19](#) and [FAQ](#) document.



Changes to Guidelines: 2022-23

- I.B.2.b. (Page 1) - To the extent that there is substantial or material inconsistency between these administrative guidelines and guidelines at the academic unit level, the University's administrative guidelines will prevail.
- I.E.2. (Page 3) – Language that affirms that promotion and tenure is a confidential process and that all parties (committee members, administrators, and candidates) are expected to maintain confidentiality.
- II.C.2. (Page 6) – *COVID-19 Impacts on Teaching*
 - Dates are updated.
- III.F.3. (Page 13) – *The Dossier*
 - SRTEs for courses available after the dossier is submitted have been identified as not being “factual change or new substantive information” and permission is needed from the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs to be added.
- V.F.2. and 4. (Page 21) – *Review Procedures*
 - Faculty on Joint Appointments
 - Primary department head and secondary department head should consult if there is a disagreement between the two decisions.
 - Primary dean and secondary dean should consult if there is a disagreement between the two decisions.



Changes to Guidelines: 2022-23

- **Appendix B (Pages 35-36) – *Timetable for 2022-2023 Promotion and Tenure Reviews***, the following is updated.
 - Updated the Timetable for 2022-2023 Promotion and Tenure Reviews.
- **Appendix F (Page 43) – *Dossier Dividers and Forms***, it is noted that the following fields and dossier dividers have been revised.
 - Promotion and Tenure Form (Page 44)
 - Removal of the signature line for Senior Vice President for Research
 - The Scholarship of Research and Creative Accomplishments (Pages 49-50)
 - Updated instructions to be clear that the University does not expect and entry in every category.
 - Service and the Scholarship of Service to the University, Society, and the Profession (Page 51)
 - Updated instructions to be clear that the University does not expect and entry in every category.
 - Updated bullets to reflect “diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.”
- **Appendix H (Page 56) - *Recommending Faculty for Early Tenure***, a qualifying statement has been added regarding willingness of department committees to review early tenure cases.
- **Appendix I (Pages 57-59)-*Immediate Tenure Reviews***
 - Reinstatement of tenure process added.



Frequently Asked Questions

- Last updated in July 2022, the P&T FAQ document on the VPFA website contains 81 questions and answers.
- Note: The FAQ document is a resource, but not policy. Follow AC23 and the Administrative Guidelines, in addition to the policies of your college, campus, school, and department.
- Like the Administrative Guidelines, the current FAQ has changes from last year.
- Contact academic unit head or VPFA if you cannot find an answer to your question!



New FAQ #7

- *When a unit significantly changes their criteria for promotion and tenure mid-probationary period, are candidates held to the new criteria?*

When the dean determines in consultation with its faculty governance body that there has been a substantive change in the unit's criteria for promotion and tenure the dean should provide candidates with the choice of which set of criteria they will be evaluated against.



Updated FAQ #19

- *When is it appropriate for a committee member to abstain from voting on a candidate who is under review for promotion and/or tenure?*

Committee members should **not abstain**. Committee members may recuse only when there is a legitimate conflict of interest, such as a relative being considered for promotion or tenure or if there was significant collaboration with the candidate. Members are encouraged to disclose possible conflicts of interest to the unit head and seek consultation about how to best manage the conflict. Conflicts of interest should be declared prior to the discussion of any candidate and members will be recused from the discussion and voting.



New FAQ #28

- *If a faculty member is on a paid or unpaid leave of any kind, may the faculty member serve on a promotion and tenure review committee?*

No, while on leave, including sabbatical leave, faculty members may not participate on promotion and tenure review committees. The academic unit should respect the purposes of the leave, including sabbatical leave, and there should be no expectation that faculty on sabbatical leave donate their research time for department service of any kind. Academic units should carefully consider whether to allow a faculty member on a one-semester leave in the spring semester to serve on a promotion and tenure committee that may be called back into service while the faculty member is on leave in the spring and the faculty member would not be able to participate in any discussions, meetings, or votes.



New FAQ #32

- *Which set of guidelines prevails when there is a discrepancy between the guidelines?*

To the extent that there is substantial or material inconsistency between these administrative guidelines and guidelines at the academic unit level, the University's administrative guidelines will prevail.



New FAQ #44

- *May a dean dismiss a faculty member as a result of a provisional year tenure review (e.g., second- or fourth-year) if both the department committee and the department head positively recommend the candidate?*

Provisional year tenure reviews end with the college dean. If the dean is considering termination of a faculty member after any provisional reviews despite positive recommendations from both the department committee and the department head, then the dossier must also be reviewed by the college committee prior to the dean acting. In units with only one level of review (i.e., department committee and dean), all dossiers must be forwarded to the university promotion and tenure committee for review regardless of the dean's decision.



New FAQ #45

- *When does a dossier move forward to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee?*

For final tenure review, a dossier moves forward to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee when either the dean is supportive of the tenure decision or when three of the four previous reviews are in support of tenure.



New FAQ #63

- *Upon appointment, I was awarded credit towards tenure. How can I return “previous tenure credit?”*

A request for a reduction in prior tenure credit will only be considered once for each faculty member. Such a request must be made prior to the initiation of the four-year tenure review. In the College of Medicine, the request must be made prior to the initiation of the sixth-year tenure review. The faculty member, via the appropriate academic unit leader petitions the dean in writing for a reduction of prior tenure credit. If the dean concurs, the request is sent to the Office of Human Resources with a copy to the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs as the Provost’s designee. See policy [ACG17](#), Requests for Reduction of Prior Tenure Credit for more details.



New FAQ #66

- *How can I appeal my tenure or promotion decision?*

Policy [AC76](#), Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, outlines how the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee may review petitions from faculty members who believe that have suffered a substantial injustice resulting from a violation of a) academic freedom; b) procedural fairness; or c) professional ethics. Prior to filing a petition, faculty members must first meet with the University or their academic unit ombudsperson. Faculty members who wish to have the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities review their tenure or promotion decision are asked to submit a petition within 90 days of the tenure decision and no later than December 31 of the tenure decision year. For example, the deadline for appeals of decisions made for cases in 2022-2023 would be December 31, 2023. Requests for an exception to this deadline may be submitted to the chair of the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee, who after consultation with the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs will determine whether to grant the exception. The guidelines for implementation in AC76 specifically provide that: “The Committee shall not consider the substantive academic judgment aspects of such matters as promotion, tenure, compensation, and evaluation of performance.”



New FAQ #72

- *What if I can't make the April 1 deadline to relinquish the extension to the probationary period due to COVID-19 because I have not received the results of my review? Can the April 1 deadline be extended?*

If you have not received the results of your annual or formal review prior to April 1, your executive unit can request an extension to the April 1 deadline.

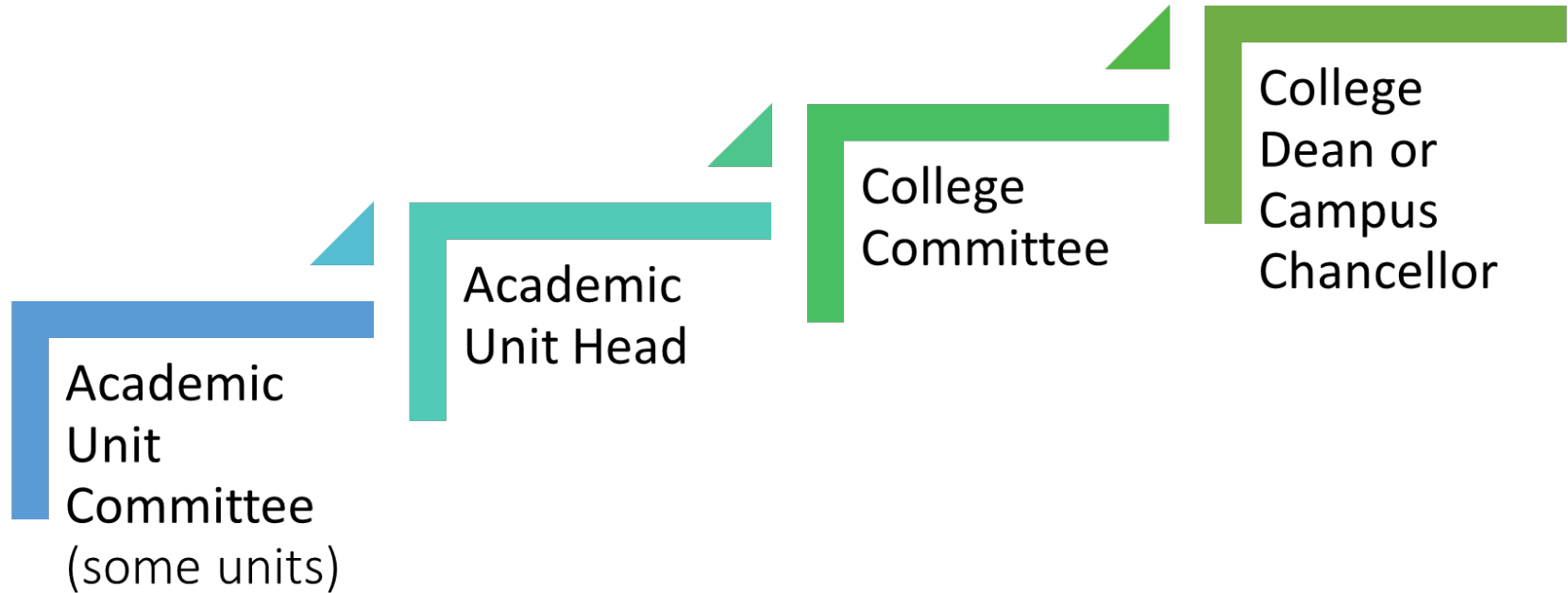


Policy AC-21

- “Definition of Academic Ranks”
- Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs is steward of AC21
 - Abby Diehl oversees promotion process of non-tenure-line faculty members
- Website for University policies: policies.psu.edu



Non-tenure-line Promotion Procedures



Non-tenure-line Promotion Procedures

Non-Tenure-Line Administrative Guidelines:

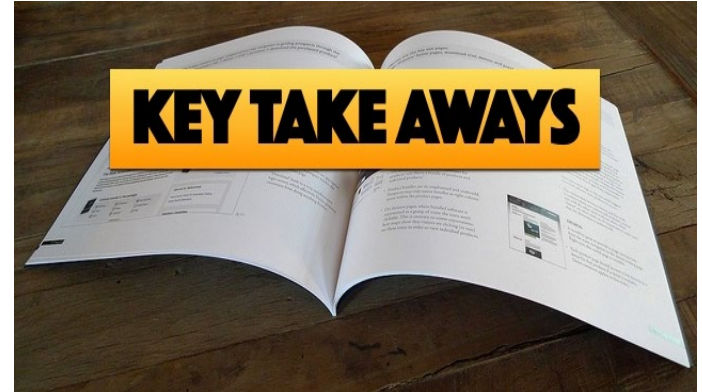
- implement the University's policy on academic ranks—AC21—and specifically non-tenure-line ranks and promotion;
- supplement but do not alter basic policies set forth in AC21;
- are revised periodically to reflect recommendations of faculty committees and administrators for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the review process.

https://vpfa.psu.edu/files/2022/06/Non-Tenure-Line-Administrative-Guidelines_6-30-22.pdf



A Few Final Thoughts

- Know and follow policies
 - Department/school
 - College/campus
 - University policy, guidelines, FAQs
- Confidentiality
- When in doubt, call! Staff in the Office of the VPFA (814-863-7494, or 3-7494 if on campus) with any additional questions.



Thank You.

Questions or Comments?



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