



Revisions to the Promotion and Tenure Administrative Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Policy AC23 for 2023-2024 and Changes to the Recommended Charge to Committees

Changes to the Administrative Guidelines

- **Effective immediately, an alternate assessment will no longer be required in the dossier.**
- **V.A.3. (Page 18)** - Unit reports are no longer distributed by the Office of Human Resources. Reports are run by unit HR's from WorkDay. This information will be removed during the 2024-2025 Administrative Guidelines update.
- **V.H.6. (Page 24)** – added language to clarify what the department-level review should focus on
- **V.I.8. (Page 26)** – new bullet was added to clarify that units may choose to not complete an annual review during the same year as a formal review of tenure-line faculty or may complete an abbreviated review.
- **Appendix A (Pages 29-35)** – a disclaimer was added regarding the “Statement of Practices for the Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness for Promotion and Tenure”
- **Appendix B (Pages 35-36)** – *Timetable for 2023-2024 Promotion and Tenure Reviews*, the following is updated.
 - Updated the Timetable for 2023-2024 Promotion and Tenure Reviews.
- **Appendix F (Pages 45-55)** – Dossier Dividers and Forms have been updated to reflect any changes needed
- **Appendix I (Pages 58-60)** – clarifying language added that Immediate Tenure reviews do not need to be completed prior to the person starting in their role and that external reviewers solicited by units must be of a higher rank than the candidate.
- **Appendix M (Pages 65-71)** –past COVID guidance (Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness, and Options for Alternative Assessment)
- **Appendix N (Pages 72-73)** – a new appendix was added for “Guidelines for Sharing Elements of the Dossier Following Formal Reviews for Tenure-Line Faculty”

Additions and Changes to the FAQs (Nos. 3, 9, 21, 23, 28, 28, 38, 41, 42, 49, and 58)

- **FAQ #3.-** this question was updated to reflect who is responsible for the preparation of the dossier

Who is responsible for the preparation of the dossier?

Preparation of the dossier is a collaborative activity between the academic unit head and the faculty member, and a shared responsibility. The academic unit head will

take the lead on setting a timeline for dossier completion and the faculty member will assemble 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, it is the faculty member's responsibility to ensure this information is entered into Activity Insight in accordance with the timeline specified. (Page 8, III.B.2; page 12, III.E.1). When disputes about the preparation of the dossier arise, the faculty member may choose to reach out to the unit ombudsperson for assistance.

- **FAQ #9.**-Added clarifying language to reflect reviews being completed in a timely manner

Can information be added to the dossier after the department committee has reviewed it, and if so, must the committee meet again to review the dossier and write a new letter?

It is not appropriate to add information to the dossier after it has been reviewed if that information was available at the time the dossier was assembled and reviewed unless a significant error **was made**. However, until February 1, if there are new achievements that might have an impact on the record then that information must be sent back to all who have already acted on the dossier. If the new information has no impact on the recommendation, then that is all that needs to be indicated. **If the new information impacts the recommendation, then a new letter must be written. Given that such reviews must occur within a short period of time, committees may change the meeting modality to accommodate committee member's schedules in order to accomplish the review in a timely manner.**

- **FAQ #21.**- Added language to identify the basis for decisions should be clearly articulated

Who has responsibility for writing the committee letter, and what should it include?

The chair of the committee has responsibility for writing the letter with input from the committee. If there is disagreement on the decision reached for a particular candidate, the minority opinion must be included in the committee's letter. Only one letter is written and it should contain the committee's singular overall vote count. The letter should not contain separate vote counts for each of the three evaluative criteria. These same procedures should be followed for second-and fourth-year reviews. **The basis for the decision should be clearly articulated in the letter.**

- **FAQ #23.** Added language as to when exceptions should be sent for approval

Should there be separate committees for tenure and promotion at the various levels?

We assume that single committees decide all tenure and promotion cases in a given year at each level and that both decisions are addressed in a single letter from each committee. The exception would be when additional senior faculty need to be added to the senior faculty on a promotion and tenure committee in order to consider a candidate for promotion to senior rank. Members below the rank to which a faculty member is being recommended should be excluded from deliberations and are ineligible to vote on such promotion cases; **exceptions to the practice should be sought from the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.**

- **FAQ #28.-** additional language has been added explaining why faculty members on leave should not participate in reviews

If a faculty member is on 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. **Faculty members on leave are not expected to complete assigned tasks during the leave.** 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. (Pages 16-17, IV.C. for a discussion of the selection and appointment of review committees). **This is fair to both the faculty member and to the candidates under review as an inconsistent application of this expectation can lead to inequities.** 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 as the faculty member would not be able to participate in any discussions, meetings, or votes.

- **FAQ #38.-** A new question has been added answering when changes by the Senate pertaining to teaching effectiveness will take effect

When will the changes recommended by the Senate pertaining to teaching effectiveness take effect?

Effective fall of 2023, a revised student feedback survey (name to be determined) will be administered in all courses. This change will not impact 4th and 6th year reviews as those dossiers will not typically include student feedback data from the fall 2023 semester. In spring of 2024 only, dossiers will include data from the student feedback survey. The changes to how student feedback will be used moving forward is considered a major change to university guidance that will take effect in 2024-2025 for all candidates undergoing 2nd review; candidates undergoing formal 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th year review in 2024-2025 will be given the option of determining which approach to student feedback to include in their dossier.

- **FAQ #41.-** A new question has been added about alternative assessment of teaching effectiveness

Must I include an alternate assessment of teaching effectiveness in my dossier?

Effective July 1, 2023, candidates are not required to include an alternate assessment in their dossier. Alternate assessments that were included in the dossier for previous formal reviews should be retained as they may be referred to in previous recommendation letters. Moving forward, faculty at Penn State will be required to submit a self-reflection as part of their annual review.

- **FAQ #42.-** A new question has been added about mid-semester feedback

May I include the results of the mid-semester feedback survey in my dossier?

Mid-semester feedback is formative and will not be shared with administrators. Candidates will not be permitted to include information about their mid-semester feedback in their dossiers or supplemental materials. If the candidate wishes to discuss mid-semester feedback in their narrative, they may choose to do so.

- **FAQ #49.-** new language has been added to document any consultations in review letters

When does a consultation occur? Can the academic unit head, dean, or the committees redo their letters as a result of this consultation?

All reviewing agents, administrators, or committees must consult with the unit that made the prior recommendation if they seek clarification or if they render a contrary recommendation or decision. They must call for that consultation only after they have received the review letters from the previous reviewers, but before they write their own, and those letters cannot be changed as a result of the consultation. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the current reviewer fully understands the reasons that the previous one used to reach a decision that may be divergent before rendering final judgment, but there is no opportunity for the current reviewer to influence or pressure the previous one into changing the already considered and written recommendation. In addition, for candidates holding joint appointments, prior to writing the evaluative letter, the dean of the primary college must consult with the dean of the secondary college. **The consultation should be documented in the letter along with a brief summary of the issues discussed.**

- **FAQ #58.-** clarifying language has been added regarding “significant” collaborators

The Guidelines say, in addition to former mentors and students, significant collaborators should not be external evaluators. What is meant by “significant?”

Disciplines will have to make that judgment, but clearly, external evaluators should not be in the position of evaluating their own work in writing a letter about the quality of the candidate’s publications, nor should they be such **significant** collaborators that their objectivity will be questioned by those who read the dossier. (Letters of appreciation of the skill and achievement of a candidate by a **significant** collaborator, who might also comment on the particular nature of the candidate’s contribution, may be solicited, but such letters would belong in the research section of

the dossier, rather than in the section on external evaluations.). **Significant** collaborators **do not** include co-researchers on a very large project, editors of books/journals in which candidates have published, or one of a number of people who are listed as contributors to a book of conference proceedings; to be clear, these individuals may serve as external evaluators.

Changes to the Recommended Charge to Committees and Administrators

- When a consultation occurs, please briefly document the substance of the consultation in the letter.
- Emphasized that the first level of review (e.g., department, campus, school, division) is expected to contextualize the work from a disciplinary perspective and that subsequent levels of review should be attentive to this review as well as the letters from external letter writers.
- Discouraged the use of split ratings (e.g., very good-good) and noted that subsequent levels of review will use the lower rating as the judgement of the committee.
- Included a reminder that ratings are required for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.
- The basis of the committee vote should be reflected in the letter and encouraged committees that were not unanimous to share the minority and majority opinions.
- Included a reminder that the criteria from promotion and tenure are the same for all candidates regardless of length of the probationary period.
- Reminded committees that the impact of COVID is expected to extend into the future.

Changes to the Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness

Several changes to the assessment of teaching effectiveness were recently recommended by the University Faculty Senate. President Bendapudi has accepted those recommendations and my office is charged with implementation. This memo will document changes that will take effect this year as well as outline changes that must be made to unit guidelines by July 1, 2024 to be implemented for the 2024-2024 promotion and tenure cycle. This is a high-level summary and more guidance will be forthcoming from my office and from the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence.

As described in the informational report to the University Faculty Senate entitled [Implementation of Structural Elements within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework](#), please note that the assessment of teaching effectiveness is grounded in the following elements of effective teaching: effective design, effective instruction, inclusive and ethical pedagogy, and reflective and evolving practice.

Effective immediately

- Effective fall of 2023, a student feedback survey (name to be determined) will be administered in all courses. This change will not impact 4th and 6th year reviews as those dossiers will not typically include student feedback data from the fall 2023 semester. In spring of 2024 only, dossiers will include data from the student feedback survey.
- Mid-semester feedback will be provided to instructors beginning in fall of 2023. Mid-

semester feedback is formative and will not be shared with administrators. Candidates will **not** be permitted to include information about their mid-semester feedback in their dossiers or supplemental materials. If the candidate wishes to discuss mid-semester feedback in their narrative, they may choose to do so.

- Effective immediately, candidates are not required to include an alternate assessment in their dossier. Alternate assessments that were included in the dossier for previous formal reviews should be retained as they may be referred to in previous recommendation letters. Moving forward, faculty at Penn State will be required to submit a self-reflection as part of their annual review (for more information see [Implementation of Self-reflection within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework](#)).

Changes to unit guidelines due by July 1, 2024

- Consistent with the third bullet point in the previous section, remove any requirements that candidates are to include an alternate assessment of teaching in the dossier.
- Several recommendations were made regarding peer review (see [Implementation of Peer Review within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework](#) for more information including a guidebook and resources). While academic units will determine their own best practices, the following recommendations should be reflected in unit promotion criteria and procedures and will take effect for all candidates undergoing formal review in 2024-2025. Units must formalize their peer review guidance with a vote by the faculty and the guidance is to be entitled “INSERT UNIT NAME Peer Review Guidelines.” Supplemental materials and communications about peer review will be made available over the course of the next academic year to assist units with the development and implementation of their Peer Review Guidance. Below are the key elements to be incorporated into Unit Peer Review Guidelines.
 - Unit Peer Review Guidelines must be consistently applied across the unit and ranks and clearly communicated to faculty. A unit can be defined as a college, campus, department, school, or division.
 - The relevant administrator and faculty member being reviewed should collaborate on choosing reviewers, with the administrator making the final decision.
 - Faculty under review should have the opportunity to submit the names of potential reviewers.
 - The faculty member under review can reject a proposed reviewer after consultation with their administrator.
 - Reviewers can be selected from either within or outside of the unit and the unit should outline the need for discipline expertise across reviewers.
- The content of each evaluation should include only evidence-based observations. That is, the assessment (i.e., evaluations and conclusions should be tied to corresponding evidence).
- Units are reminded that current policy (AC23) and the Administrative Guidelines for AC23 Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations uses the term “peer review” and “peer observation” is not a required element of peer review. Summative peer review of teaching ideally consists of more than one source of assessment that may or may not include class observation.

- If classroom observation is an element of the unit's peer review procedure, classroom observations can occur both in remote teaching and other classroom settings.
 - Units should have guidelines for reviewing courses in a variety of delivery modes (e.g., hybrid, in-person, online).
 - Unit should make clear what constitutes a class observation, should one be required.
 - Units will determine which sources of assessment will be used and how these sources will be reviewed.
- Substantive changes to how student feedback will be used in promotion and tenure reviews have been made (see [Implementation of Student Feedback within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework](#) for more information). The changes to how student feedback will be used is considered a major change to university guidance that will take effect in 2024-2025 for all candidates undergoing 2nd review and candidates undergoing formal 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th year review in 2024-2025 will be given the option of determining which approach to student feedback to include in their dossier. More guidance will be forthcoming from my office and the following reflects the high-level changes that must be made to unit promotion and tenure guidelines.
 - Please note that a unit can be defined as a college, campus, department, school, or division.
 - Each candidate will be reviewed by a Student Feedback Review Committee convened by the academic unit head.
 - The Student Feedback Review committee is charged with examining student feedback from all available courses for the period encompassed by the promotion and tenure review.
 - Each Committee will be comprised of three faculty members and all must hold rank equivalent to or higher than the rank for which the candidate is being reviewed; one of those members will represent the faculty member's discipline
 - One individual should be elected annually by the faculty in the unit and will serve as the committee chair.
 - One individual will be selected by the chairperson of the committee from a list of one or more Penn State faculty nominated by the candidate; this individual may be from any campus or college.
 - One individual will be selected by the chairperson of the committee from a list of one or more Penn State faculty nominated by the unit administrator; this individual may be from any campus or college.
 - The Student Feedback Review Committee will submit a holistic report that is 1200-1500 words long that describes the candidate's teaching effectiveness in the courses taught during the review period based on student feedback. Based on student feedback, the report will provide a) an overview; evaluations of teaching effectiveness through b) course design, c) instruction, d) inclusive and ethical pedagogy, e) reflective and evolving practices, and f) avenues or opportunities for

improvement. This report will be included in the dossier and can be reviewed by the candidate.

- If the candidate perceives that the Student Feedback Review Committee report in the dossier inadequately represent the teaching effectiveness based on student feedback, they have the opportunity to review their narratives to address that discrepancy and the option of including student feedback in in their supplemental materials.

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