

**Guidelines and Best Practices for Promotion and Tenure Process (P&T)**  
**Updated for Academic Year 2007-2008**  
**Provost's Office, Iowa State University**

## **1.0 Requirements for P&T materials submitted to Provost**

In section 5.3.1 of the *Faculty Handbook*, the candidate's responsibilities are outlined. These include the submission of

- A "Promotion and Tenure Vita" (5.3.1.1, 5.3.1.2, 5.3.1.3, and 5.3.1.4)
- A "Faculty Portfolio" (5.3.2, 5.3.2.1, and 5.3.2.2), and
- The current position responsibility statement (PRS) and prior statements for the period under review (5.1.1.5).

The "Promotion and Tenure Vita," the PRS(s), and portions of the "Faculty Portfolio" will also be submitted to the Provost, along with evaluative materials on the candidate, as specified below. Actual tabs for the organization of materials are available in the Provost's Office (department should contact [mklee@iastate.edu](mailto:mklee@iastate.edu) ).

(\* Indicates materials required by Provost's Office)

### **1.1 Tab 1: PRS\* and VITA\* (also cover page and Checklist from Provost's web page\*)**

Material in this section will include the PRS(s) and the VITA put together by the candidate.

PRS: Include both current PRS and other PRS statements operative during the period of review.

VITA: Vita is a listing of the candidate's faculty activities and accomplishments. See 5.3.1.1. Promotion and Tenure Vita, in *Faculty Handbook*, for a description of what to include.

### **1.2 Tab 2: Documentation of candidate's scholarship and performance, summary of faculty portfolio\***

Material in this section is a summary (**up to 25 pages allowed**) of the Faculty Portfolio described in section 5.3.2 of the *Faculty Handbook*. In many departments, candidates will be asked to prepare more extensive portfolios, including primary materials, for use at the department and/or college level. Materials forwarded to the Provost can include up to 25 pages of the portfolio. Check with college office for materials to forward to college.

The materials may be developed by the candidate, as is currently the case in many colleges (the Provost's Office strongly recommends some oversight or review from a senior faculty member), or by the department (with involvement of the candidate). As the *Faculty Handbook* specifies, the portfolio should "provide a clear understanding of the candidate's accomplishments within scholarship and his or her areas of faculty activities" (5.3.2). It also specifies that the portfolio include "an overall statement of the candidate's accomplishments in scholarship as they relate to teaching, research/creative activities, and extension/professional practice." The *Handbook* offers an extensive listing of the kinds of

items which may be reviewed or included in the portfolio. The following should, in all cases, be included as a part of the limited materials forwarded to the Provost:

- Teaching philosophy\*
- Statement of research/creative activities accomplishments and future scholarly agenda.\*
- Portfolio materials on performance of responsibilities in teaching, research/creative activities, extension/professional practice, and institutional service\*.
- Teaching materials must include, in tabular form, teaching evaluation data with comparative department or college norms. \*

Materials in Tabs 1 and 2 will constitute the “factual record” which the candidate reviews before it is forwarded to the college and the Provost (see 5.2.4.1.6).

### **1.3 Tab 3: Department Evaluations**

Department-level review is described in 5.2.4.1; the following items are to be included in this section:

Chair’s recommendation\*

Recommendation from other program(s) or department(s) with whom the candidate is affiliated. Some colleges require a specific process for faculty with appointments in both programs and departments. \*

Department vote/recommendation\* (include if part of department procedures).

Department P&T committee vote/recommendation\* (include if part of department procedures).

### **1.4 Tab 4: College Evaluations**

College-level review is described in 5.2.4.2; the following items are to be included in this section:

Dean’s recommendation.\*

College P&T Committee vote and recommendation.\*

Associate Deans’ recommendation or other college review.

### **1.5 Tab 5: External Evaluations**

Include the following in this section:

- A copy of the letter sent out requesting evaluation from experts external to the institution (sample letters are available on Provost’s web page).\*
- Summary statements on reviewers’ qualifications.\*
- Listing of letters, including name, institution, and nominator.\* The department can choose to use the “Log of External Letters” available on the Provost’s web site. Clarify which evaluators were suggested by candidate and which were suggested by chair/committee.
- All letters received from external evaluators.\*

## **2.0 Best practices for P&T materials submitted to Provost**

Please refer to section 5.3 for a full description of documentation for P&T review. Below are additional good practices.

### **2.1 Tab 1: PRS and VITA**

- VITA should include page numbers for publications.
- Role in collaborations should be explained.
- Funding record should clarify candidate's role in collaborative grants.
- VITA should give graduation dates of graduate students.
- Some colleges ask that candidates indicate on the VITA the "start point" for the current promotion.

### **2.2 Tab 2: Documentation of candidate's scholarship and position responsibilities, summary of faculty portfolio**

- Organization of materials varies depending on the responsibilities and achievements of the candidate.
- There are many excellent ways to demonstrate the quality and impact of the candidate's work. Portfolios often include summary materials such as the following: a table of grant activity, an explanation of scholarly impact, an explanation of the synergy among various responsibilities, future plans, courses taught each semester with enrollment numbers, summaries of peer evaluation of teaching, detail on collaborations with students.
- Documentation should clarify impact of candidate in areas of responsibility.
- List of graduate students (with graduation dates) should be included here or in VITA.
- Include explanations of candidate's contribution in collaborative work.
- Clarify contribution to professional organizations, including leadership roles.

### **2.3 Tab 3: Department Evaluations**

- Chair may draw from annual review reports and probationary review reports to clarify faculty member's prior evaluation. A brief summary of the departmental P&T evaluation process (including voting eligibility) should also be included.
- As specified in department, college, and university documents, include evaluation from programs or other departments the candidate is formally associated with.
- Evaluate the candidate based on the definition of scholarship and the criteria in the P&T document.
- Peer evaluation of teaching may be included here or in Tab 2, depending on confidentiality and the departmental process of review.
- Department should clarify quality of publication venues if candidate has not.

### **2.4 Tab 4: College Evaluations**

- Focus on analysis and interpretation of record, not restatement and summary. A brief summary of the college evaluation process (including voting eligibility) should be included.
- Evaluate the candidate based on the definition of scholarship and the criteria in the P&T document.

## **2.5 Tab 5: External Evaluations**

### **2.5.1 Selection of external evaluators**

- Department chair has the responsibility to check that those solicited to write evaluations are not major collaborators (now or in past) and have appropriate credentials and positions. All of those nominated by the candidate may not be appropriate to contact. It is the chair's job to assess the appropriateness of the nominated evaluators.
- External evaluators should be well-known for their scholarship and should have a focus similar to that of the candidate.
- Avoid emeritus reviewers, except in cases of distinction.
- The majority of evaluators should be from institutions similar to or more prestigious than ISU.
- If the evaluators know the candidate, they should not be closely allied. Letters should not be solicited from those who have worked closely with the candidate, including members of a dissertation committee, post-doc advisors or co-authors.
- External evaluators may be selected for their expertise in scholarship of teaching and extension/professional practice as well as in scholarship of research.
- Do NOT select reviewers for promotions to full who were reviewers for promotion to associate.
- Do NOT use the same reviewers for two different faculty members in a single year.
- Evaluators are usually academics, although it may be appropriate to draw occasionally from industry and government.
- The *Faculty Handbook* specifies six letters maximum. Four is usually not enough.
- Candidates should NOT have direct contact with external reviewers about the process.

### **2.5.2 Letter and materials sent to external evaluators**

- Letters need to include all of the categories of information in the sample letters on the Provost's web page, although the wording is flexible. They need to be neutral in tone. The ISU P&T Policy and process needs to be explained.
- Clarify the time period under review. For tenure/promotion to associate, the focus should be on the last five years of work (at ISU or elsewhere). For promotion to full, the focus should be on accomplishments since appointment to associate.

- Include with your request letter the summary of the ISU *Faculty Handbook* sections on P&T or a complete copy of the ISU *Faculty Handbook* chapter on P&T (see summary of *Faculty Handbook* sections on Provost's web site).
- If a candidate for tenure has had an extension of the tenure clock, note this to external evaluators. The letter does not need to list a reason for the extension(s). Explain that the extra time does NOT bring with it the expectation of additional accomplishments.
- There is no requirement that external evaluators comment on whether or not the candidate would be tenured and/or promoted at their institutions.
- We recommend that you keep a log of external letters received (see Provost's web site).
- Develop materials for external reviewers in consultation with the candidate. You MUST send a selection of scholarship for the reviewers to consider (i.e. a CV is not enough). Most departments include the CV, the 25-page faculty portfolio, and a sample of scholarly products. Do not send materials published earlier than the period under review; very recent articles or pieces under review should be included.
- Leave plenty of time for review by external parties.
- The letter to the external evaluators needs to be completely neutral about the quality of the candidate's work.

### **3.0 General good practices in review, mentoring, and training**

#### **3.1 Annual review, probationary review.**

It's important to document all reviews in writing and to distribute these to faculty. During the evaluation of tenure-eligible faculty for tenure, it is particularly important to review past annual reviews and the probationary review, so that the chair knows what messages about performance have been conveyed and how those relate to the findings of the P&T review. (If there has been more than one chair, this may be particularly important.) Some departments routinely include annual reviews in the chair's P&T comments. As the chair does annual reviews, he/she should include commentary on accomplishments, areas that need additional attention, and recommendations. If performance is inadequate, the chair should indicate this and be specific about what improvements/performance are needed.

Annual review is different than peer review, and new faculty need to have this difference clarified. Probationary review, tenure review, and promotion review are different than annual review since they include the review of several years of performance.

#### **3.2 Mentoring.**

During annual review the chair should check that tenure-eligible faculty are getting appropriate mentoring. The mentor appointed in the first year is expected to continue in that role for several years, ideally until the tenure review; but sometimes the relationship does not

work out and it is the chair's responsibility to see that a new mentoring relationship is established when necessary.

Mentoring plays a key role in the success of faculty who are seeking tenure. The department chair and the senior faculty share responsibility for mentoring and for ensuring that new faculty have the information and support they need to succeed.

### **3.3 PRS.**

The position responsibility statement should be central to the evaluation process. Chairs should review the expectations connected to the PRS during annual reviews and work with faculty on appropriate changes in preparation for P&T review. There is no one template, but the PRS should not be so specific that it needs to be rewritten every year. It should be flexible enough to allow for common changes in faculty responsibilities (a new course is assigned, faculty buy themselves out of a course assignment, committee service changes, etc.).

### **3.4 Training.**

The Provost's Office recommends that colleges convene department chairs and P&T committee chairs for college-level annual discussions about the P&T process, to review best practices, policy changes, and issues of concern. Some colleges also convene tenure-eligible faculty and others considering promotion to provide guidance and answer questions. Colleges also post best practices on their web sites.

## **4.0. Issues in P&T review process**

### **4.1 Using the criteria for promotion and tenure.**

The university P&T document lists several major criteria for P&T. Review of faculty at the department and college level needs to measure faculty work against all of these criteria. These criteria are as follows:

**5.2.3.2. Associate Professor and/or Tenure.** An associate professor should have a solid academic reputation and show promise of further development and productivity in his /her academic career. The candidate must demonstrate the following:

- excellence in scholarship that establishes the individual as a significant contributor to the field or profession, with potential for national distinction
- effectiveness in areas of position responsibilities
- satisfactory institutional service

Furthermore, a recommendation for promotion to associate professor and granting of tenure must be based upon an assessment that the candidate has made contributions of appropriate magnitude and quality and has a high likelihood of sustained contributions to the field or profession and to the university.

**5.2.3.3. Professor.** A professor should be recognized by his/her professional peers within the university, as well as nationally and/or internationally, for the quality of the contribution to his /her discipline. The candidate must demonstrate the following:

- national distinction in scholarship, as evident in candidate's wide recognition and outstanding contributions to the field or profession
- effectiveness in areas of position responsibilities
- significant institutional service

Furthermore, a recommendation for promotion to professor must be based upon an assessment, since the last promotion, that the candidate has made contributions of appropriate magnitude and quality and has demonstrated the ability to sustain contributions to the field or profession and to the university.

Please keep the following in mind in the review of faculty using these criteria.

**4.1.1. Definition of Scholarship.** Each person reviewing the materials needs to be familiar with the current definition of scholarship and the criteria for excellence/national distinction in scholarship. The definition of scholarship is flexible enough to accommodate different faculty profiles and responsibilities, but departmental, college, and university review is important in determining the quality and impact of the scholarship. All faculty members must meet the criterion in scholarship, regardless of the specific PRS.

**4.1.2. Effectiveness in areas of responsibility.** Each faculty member is required to be effective in all areas of responsibility (research/creative activities, teaching, and/or extension/professional practice). The standard of performance is NOT competence, but effectiveness.

**4.1.3. Institutional Service.** There are different standards for institutional service at the associate and the full professor level. For promotion to full professor, a candidate must demonstrate significant institutional service.

**4.1.4. Scholarly teaching and scholarship of teaching.** *Scholarly teaching* focuses on student learning and is well grounded in the sources and resources appropriate to the field; we should expect this of all teaching faculty. *Scholarship of teaching and learning* takes the work of the faculty member beyond the individual classroom at ISU as the teaching becomes public, peer-reviewed and critiqued, and exchanged with other members of professional and disciplinary communities; not all faculty produce scholarship of teaching and learning.

**4.1.5. Department standards.** As the university document specifies, a department may “specify standards that exceed those of the university or college, provided that they do not conflict with the standards of either, and provided the procedures are consistent with those described in the *Faculty Handbook*.”

## **4.2 Untenured faculty with prior experience and accomplishments.**

The last five years are the key for review of faculty up for promotion to associate professor and tenure. Although earlier accomplishments might help to establish a record, the review should focus on work in the most recent five years.