

Guidelines for Preliminary Review of Tenure-Eligible Faculty

Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost

The preliminary (third year) review of pre-tenure faculty is an important aspect of Iowa State's protocol for the evaluation of early-career faculty and their advancement toward promotion and tenure. The *ISU Faculty Handbook* (chapter 5) includes the definition of faculty responsibilities as well as criteria for evaluation and review, including preliminary review.

Timing of the Review. Depending on the initial contract signed by the untenured faculty member, the timing of the review will vary slightly. It is important that the letter of offer specify for the new faculty member exactly when this review will take place.

- ***Faculty hired with full probationary period***
We recommend that faculty be hired on a four-year initial contract, with a preliminary review in year three. The faculty member needs notification of whether or not his/her contract will be renewed by May 15 of that third year. Standard renewal is for three additional years, with tenure review during year six.
- ***Faculty hired with credit towards tenure***
Even with a shortened contract, faculty should have a peer review no later than their third year. Chairs should consider scheduling a review sooner than the third year so that the new faculty member has peer feedback on his/her progress in time to make any needed corrections before the tenure review. The timing of any non-mandatory peer review should be specified in the letter of offer.
- ***Faculty with at least some part-time years/semesters during probationary period***
Section 5.1.1.3 outlines policy guiding the timing of preliminary reviews for faculty on part-time appointments for at least a portion of the pre-tenure years. Each annual review of such faculty should specify the timing of upcoming reviews. A faculty member on an extended part-time appointment could potentially have two preliminary reviews.
- ***Faculty with joint appointments in a second department or a program***
The primary academic department has responsibility for ensuring that preliminary reviews are conducted according to policy. The involvement of the second department or program should be specified in the initial letter of offer.
- ***Faculty hired as untenured associate or full professors***
Although this is a rare hiring decision, such tenure-eligible faculty are also reviewed in accordance with policy for probationary faculty, as specified in the details above.
- ***Faculty hired "mid-year."***
Faculty hired mid-year may have a slightly longer probationary period, depending on the contractual decisions made at the time of hire. The letter of offer should clarify the dates of review.

Departments and colleges should consult on unusual cases. Specific questions can be directed to Associate Provost Dawn Bratsch-Prince.

Materials to be forwarded to the Senior Vice President and Provost

Each year, materials from the preliminary review are forwarded by the departments to the Dean, who will forward them to the Provost **by May 1**. The following materials are required by the Provost:

- **Cover Sheet for Preliminary Review Recommendation** (See: <http://provost.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/CoverSheetPreliminaryReview.pdf>)
- **Candidate's Position Responsibility Statement**
- **Candidate's CV**
- **The evaluation prepared by the department's review committee, in the form of a memo to the chair.** The memo should include the name of the chair of the committee and names of the faculty members who served on that committee. The evaluation should be analytical, and not just a review of process, recitation of the CV, or a summary statement. The evaluation should point out, discuss, and analyze strengths and weaknesses in the case. It is a best practice to put concerns up front and deal with them directly and clearly.
- **The chair's letter to the candidate.** That letter should provide clear and constructive feedback about accomplishments, set forth expectations toward meeting the standard for subsequent promotion and tenure, and clearly identify areas where performance improvement is needed.
- **The dean's letter to the candidate.** Note: Some college governance documents do not require a letter from the dean.
- **A cover memo to the Provost in which the dean summarizes the college's cases,** and indicate steps you have taken for continuous improvement of process in your college.

In all cases, the candidate should receive detailed evaluation of his/her strengths and weaknesses including clear and constructive advice on expectations for the promotion and tenure review.

The letter from the chair and/or dean to the faculty member must indicate whether or not the pre-tenure faculty member is being reappointed, along with the terms of the reappointment terms (for instance, a one-year renewal, two-year renewal, etc.). The letter should state specific reasons for the decision and, if appropriate, suggestions for performance improvements. The letter should specifically indicate that one of four possible decisions has been made:

- **Reappointment with no reservation**
- **Reappointment with no strong reservation, but with specific issues that need to be addressed**
- **Reappointment with reservation and specific steps to be taken (may entail a one- or two-year renewal with an additional review scheduled before the mandatory tenure review)**
- **Non-reappointment with specific reasons**