

# Tenure and Promotion Processes

These procedures are to be used in considering candidacies for promotion and for continuous appointment (i.e., tenure). Unless noted otherwise, the procedures related to promotion and tenure decisions are based on the UNL Guidelines (V.D. for promotion and VI.D. for tenure). Relevant units must coordinate their efforts to follow these procedures when candidates have joint appointments.

The promotion and tenure process involves nomination for tenure and the nomination for promotion whereas the promotion process involves just the nomination for promotion.

## Summary of Promotion Process

The promotion and tenure processes must be initiated through a nomination process. Nominations may be made at the appropriate time by any member of the faculty, including the candidate.

- Nominations are submitted to the department chair or director or to the unit's appropriate committee, depending on the bylaws of the candidate's department.
- Nominations for tenure and promotion may occur in the same year and must involve separate votes.
- People may not be nominated without their consent, as indicated in a signed statement.
- Nominations made without the candidate's consent may be withdrawn by the candidate; withdrawn nominations must not prejudice the consideration of future nominations.
- At any time, candidates may request that their nomination be withdrawn from further consideration. Such requests will be honored without prejudicing future attempts to secure promotion.

## Summary of Tenure Process

At the time the faculty member is proposed for initial appointment to a Specific Term position, the tenure notification date is established in the tenure track letter of offer. This letter specifies any credit given to the individual as a result of previous experience.

- The tenure review process must be initiated in time to be concluded before the tenure notification date specified in the tenure track letter of offer. For a new faculty member without credit for prior experience, the Guidelines state that the review process would normally begin in the fall term of the sixth year of appointment (VI.D.2.).
- The awarding of tenure before the mandatory time may be considered for the truly exceptional person. Early tenure implies that a candidate has exceeded in the shorter time period the type of sustained high level of performance that would be expected over the normal probationary period. Failure to be awarded tenure after early nomination will not prejudice later consideration. Refusal to be considered at the mandatory time is equivalent to resignation no later than at the end of the probationary period.

- Faculty members with extensive academic experience may be offered a continuous appointment (tenure) at the time they are hired, if the department, the A&S Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Dean, the EVC, and the Chancellor approve prior to the extension of the offer.
- At any time candidates for early tenure may request that their nomination be withdrawn from further consideration. Such requests will be honored without prejudicing their consideration for tenure in the future.

## **Time Considerations**

Chairs and directors must set deadlines to ensure that the promotion and tenure process can fully be completed by the College and University deadlines. Chairs/Directors often find it helpful to calculate backwards from the date the file is due in the Dean's Office. The necessary time considerations are as follows:

### PUTTING TOGETHER THE FILE

- Candidates should be updating their files over the years so there is not a rush to complete the file at the last minute.
- Departments/Programs need to provide adequate mentoring to candidates on what is needed in the file, what the department/program provides and what the candidate is responsible for, and the deadlines for when the file needs to be turned in.

### PEER EVALUATION OF TEACHING

- Departments/Programs initiate the peer evaluation of teaching process.
- A minimum of two peer evaluations must be included in both tenure and promotion files.
- These peer evaluations can occur at any time during the tenure candidate's probationary period or since the promotion candidate's last promotion.
- The College strongly advises departments/programs not to wait until the fall semester of the year the candidate is up for tenure or promotion to get the peer evaluations of teaching completed.

### EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

- Candidates need to decide on the level of rights they are going to waive and then fill out and sign the "Waiver of Right to See Information Form" (at [http://cas.unl.edu/pt2017/Waiver\\_Statement.pdf](http://cas.unl.edu/pt2017/Waiver_Statement.pdf)).
- The candidate and the department/program identify possible external reviewers.
- The chair must get approval for all names on the final list from the Dean's Office before soliciting the external reviews. In the spring or early summer, Chairs should submit a list that includes each external reviewer's name, rank/position, university affiliation, and who recommended the person (the candidate or the department/program). If any of the external reviewers is not a full professor or professor of practice equivalent or is not at a Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity university (check at <http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/lookup/lookup.php>), chairs/directors need to include

a justification for why the external reviewer is included on the list. Expect the Dean's Office to take up to two business days to provide its approval or a notification that an external reviewer is not approved.

- Chairs must leave adequate time to solicit and collect reviews. As soon as they get approval from the Dean's Office, they solicit the cooperation of the external reviewers.
- The use of external reviews is controlled by university procedures and expectations. Letters soliciting such reviews must inform potential reviewers of the extent to which review contents and authors will be known to the candidate. Departments should ensure that the process of choosing and soliciting the cooperation of external reviewers occurs in a timely manner so that a candidate's file will be considered by College and campus deadlines. Experience indicates that it is useful to initiate the external review process during the late spring or early summer preceding the academic year in which the candidate's file will be considered.
- For more information regarding external reviewers please click here [https://cas.unl.edu/pt2016/External\\_Reviews\\_Policy.docx](https://cas.unl.edu/pt2016/External_Reviews_Policy.docx)

### FACULTY COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

- The faculty committee members must have time, usually at least one week, to read the file prior to the meeting to consider promotion and/or tenure.
- After the meeting, the person responsible for writing the letter needs time both to write the letter and to circulate a draft among committee members to get feedback.
- Once the letter is in its final form, the letter should be given to the candidate. The candidate has up to five (5) working days after receiving the letter, whether the decision is positive or negative, to respond to the decision. If a reconsideration is requested, the faculty committee must have time to reconsider the file, hold another meeting for the reconsideration vote, write a new draft of the letter, circulate it, and get it finalized. The candidate has up to five (5) days to write a response, if desired, to the final draft.

### CHAIR CONSIDERATION

- The chair/director needs time to review the candidate's entire file and to write a letter to the Dean making an independent recommendation with clearly stated assessments of the candidate's performance that explain his or her recommendation.
- A copy of the letter is given to the candidate, who has five (5) working days to respond and, if desired, request a reconsideration. If a reconsideration is requested, the chair needs time to reconsider the recommendation and to write a second and final transmittal letter to the Dean with his or her recommendation. A copy is given to the candidate, who has five (5) working days to submit a response, if desired.

### JOINT APPOINTMENTS

- If candidates hold joint appointments, the process needs to start earlier to allow the non-home unit faculty and chair/director go through the process outlined above before the file is sent to the home unit for consideration.

- Candidates must be given the same five (5) working day time period to respond to the recommendations made by the faculty and the chair/director and to any new material included in the file. Please make sure this extra time is taken into account so the file is ready on time and the external review letters have been received in time for the non-home unit to begin its deliberations.

## DEADLINE

- The complete file must be completed in the online P&T system to the Dean's Office by the deadline (early November for decisions involving tenure and early January for decisions involving only promotion).

## **Promotion and Tenure Detailed Steps**

1. The promotion and tenure processes must be initiated through a nomination process.
  - a. See promotion and tenure process summary above.
  - b. Withdrawal of nominations may be made. Please see promotion and tenure process above.
  - c. Department deadlines will be adjusted annually based on University and College deadlines. (Please see the "Time Considerations" above.) The deadlines must provide adequate opportunity for due process in the consideration of a candidate's file, including time to initiate and consider reconsiderations and appeals of negative recommendations. In setting unit deadlines and schedules, chairs should keep in mind that campus deadlines in the past required the files for candidates for tenure and promotion to be in the Dean's Office around early November and the files of candidates for promotion to be in the Dean's Office around early January. When candidates have joint appointments, the chairs or directors of both of the candidate's units must work together to set coordinated schedules and deadlines.
2. Once nominated, candidates are responsible for preparing the files supporting their nominations.
  - a. The building of a candidate's file should begin when the letter of offer is signed and materials are collected and analyzed for a probationary faculty member's first annual performance review and first reappointment.
  - b. Department and program administrators and the Dean's Office are responsible for advising candidates on the form and contents of their files.
  - c. The recommendations from each stage of the review become part of the candidate's file.
  - d. Files must be organized to comply with instructions from the EVC and the Dean's Office. Please see <https://cas.unl.edu/p-t-candidate-file-preparation> for file organization.
  - e. Unless they waive certain rights (i.e., rights related to external reviews), candidates are entitled to have access to all the materials in a file and to know the identity of everyone who reviews all or parts of their files. The individual who presides at the unit's deliberations cannot allow new material to be introduced into the file unless the candidate has had the opportunity to review, object to, and respond to the material. The candidate must be given five (5) working days to

respond to the possible inclusion of new material. The presiding official decides whether to include the new material after receiving the candidate's response (or after the five-day period has elapsed if no response is received).

## **Department/Program Consideration**

### ***Faculty Committee(s)***

3. Nominations are first considered by the candidate's department/program faculty. If the candidate has a joint appointment, the unit that is not the home department will review the file first followed by the home department. The candidate's file will be reviewed by the appropriate committee(s) of colleagues (in each unit for joint appointments) who are able to make informed judgments about the candidate by virtue of their rank, credentials, and experience. The process of constituting such committees must be established at the time of the apportionment or reapportionment of a candidate's responsibilities. These processes are normally laid out in the department or program bylaws.
  - a. REGARDING PROMOTION: Departments are organized in different ways to review nominations; the most common approaches involve all faculty who hold the rank equal to or higher than that to which a candidate aspires or an elected subset of this group (i.e., a tenure and promotion committee).
  - b. REGARDING TENURE: Nominations are normally first considered by a committee of the candidate's department (or program or other unit if the candidate has a joint appointment). The committee must be composed of faculty in the unit who are tenured or who are an elected subset of this group.
4. While the chair/director of the candidate's unit shall not vote, the chair/director normally participates in the unit's deliberations.
  - a. Each unit shall have rules determining the chair/director's role. Regardless of what that role is, the chair/director must have the opportunity to meet with the committee to discuss its recommendation. The discussions at unit meetings should be free, candid, and based only on the material in the candidate's file.
5. The decision and vote on whether to recommend the candidate for promotion and/or tenure must be transmitted in writing to the candidate via a letter addressed to the department or program chair/director.
  - a. The letter must include the vote on promotion and/or tenure and a performance assessment of all areas of the candidate's apportionment (teaching, research, service, administration, and/or outreach) using the categories from the A&S Handbook: outstanding, superior, good, adequate, and inadequate.
  - b. The synopsis must clearly describe the reasons for each recommendation to give the candidate an opportunity to prepare rebuttal arguments (if a majority of faculty vote against promotion or tenure) or to comment on assessments of the record and on faculty votes (if the majority faculty vote is positive).
6. Upon receipt of the faculty's transmittal letter, the candidate has five (5) working days in which to:
  - a. Review and comment on the faculty's performance assessments and on the faculty's vote if the majority of faculty voted to recommend promotion or tenure; or

- b. Ask for a reconsideration and to submit a rebuttal argument if the faculty's recommendation is not to promote or tenure the candidate. Such requests must be granted as expeditiously as possible and the reconsideration must be completed in time to comply with the submission deadline to the next level of review. No negative recommendation from the faculty shall be forwarded to the unit chair/director until the reconsideration is complete. Candidates may attend the reconsideration meeting to argue their case and to answer questions (a decision against appearing must not be used against them); candidates must leave before vote(s) are cast.
7. After the faculty committee has gone through this process, it places its final letter in the file and transmits the file to the chair/director for the next level of review.
  - a. The candidate is provided with a copy of the final letter and has the right to write a comment or rebuttal to go in the file.
  - b. The candidate cannot ask for a second reconsideration from the faculty committee.

### ***Chair/Director***

8. The chair will review the candidate's entire record and make an independent recommendation on promotion and/or tenure.
  - a. This recommendation must be transmitted in writing to the candidate and must use the evaluative terms in the A&S Handbook (outstanding, superior, good, adequate, inadequate).
  - b. The letter, addressed to the Dean, must clearly specify the chair's reasons for the recommendation(s) so that a candidate who has received an adverse chair/director recommendation can prepare a rebuttal argument. The candidate has five (5) working days in which to:
    - 1) Review and comment on the chair/director's performance assessments if the chair/director recommended promotion and/or tenure; or
    - 2) Ask for a reconsideration by the chair/director and to submit a rebuttal argument. If requested, the reconsideration must be completed as expeditiously as possible and in time to comply with the submission deadline to the next level of review. No negative recommendation from the chair/director shall be forwarded to the College until the reconsideration is complete.
9. After this process is completed, the chair/director places the letter in the file. If this is the final home department review, the file is transmitted to the Dean's Office.
  - a. A copy of the letter is given to the candidate, who has the right to write a rebuttal that will be placed in the file (but does not have the right to a second reconsideration from the chair/director).
  - b. If the candidate has a joint appointment, the non-home unit's chair or director places the letter in the file, which is then transmitted to the home unit and the process begins again (beginning with #3 above).

### **College Consideration**

10. The Dean's Office examines the file to make sure it is complete.
11. The A&S Promotion and Tenure Committee meets to review the file in order to make a recommendation to the Dean.
  - a. The Dean may participate in the Promotion and Tenure Committee's deliberations and may discuss its recommendations with the committee but does not vote with the committee.
  - b. All discussions should be free and candid and must be based on material in the file.
  - c. The purpose of the Promotion and Tenure Committee's review is to ensure that proper standards are being applied in the College and that the standards have been appropriately applied to the candidate. The committee's recommendation, vote, and a synopsis of the discussion assessing the candidate's record using the terms from the A&S Handbook will be transmitted in writing to the candidate and the candidate's chair/director(s).
    - 1) If a majority of the committee votes in favor of promotion and/or tenure, the candidate has five (5) working days upon receipt of the transmittal to review and comment on the committee's performance assessment and its vote.
    - 2) If the recommendation is negative, the candidate has five (5) working days upon receipt of the transmittal to ask the committee to reconsider its recommendation and to draft a rebuttal argument using the synopsis of the committee discussion. This rebuttal will be put in the candidate's file. The candidate or the candidate's representatives (chosen by the candidate) may, at the candidate's request, attend a meeting with the College Promotion and Tenure Committee to make an argument on behalf of the candidate and to answer questions. The candidate or representatives will then be asked to leave the room and the Promotion and Tenure Committee will reconsider its decision and take a new vote. The committee will conduct the reconsideration as expeditiously as possible and make a decision in time to meet the deadline for submission to the next level.
12. After the completion of Promotion and Tenure Committee deliberations, including any reconsideration of an initial negative decision, the committee sends a letter to the Dean reporting its assessments and vote(s).
13. The Dean reviews the candidate's entire record to ensure that the College is applying proper standards and that they have been appropriately applied to the candidate. Based on this review, the Dean writes an independent recommendation and assessment in a letter to the EVC and sends copies of the letter to the candidate, the candidate's chair(s), and the chair of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee.
  - a. If the Dean's recommendation is positive, the candidate has five (5) working days in which to review and comment on the Dean's assessment of the record and on the Dean's recommendation.
  - b. If the Dean's recommendation is negative, the Dean must inform the candidate in writing that the candidate has five (5) working days upon receipt of the Dean's letter in which to ask for a reconsideration and to submit rebuttal arguments. The letter must clearly specify the Dean's reasons for an adverse recommendation in order to give the candidate an opportunity to prepare a rebuttal argument. If requested, the candidate or the candidate's representatives (chosen by the candidate) can meet with

the Dean as part of the reconsideration process. The reconsideration must be completed as expeditiously as possible and in time to comply with the submission deadline to the next level of review.

### **Executive Vice Chancellor Consideration**

14. After completion of the Dean's deliberations, including any reconsideration of an initial negative decision, the Dean places the letter in the candidate's file. A file's transmittal to the EVC depends on whether it is a promotion or a tenure file.
  - a. REGARDING PROMOTION: If either the College Promotion and Tenure Committee or the Dean recommend promotion, the file must be forwarded to the EVC for consideration. If the College Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Dean concur in a recommendation *against* promotion, the promotion process ends. Candidates and their department(s) each have a right to appeal the decision of the College to the EVC. Candidates and their chair/director receive a copy of the Dean's letter to the EVC that informs them of these appellate rights.
  - b. REGARDING TENURE: All tenure nominations must be forwarded to the EVC, regardless of decisions at the College level.
  
15. The EVC reviews the file, including recommendations from the College and the department(s), and makes an independent recommendation to the Chancellor.
  - a. The EVC's review is to ensure that the appropriate promotion and/or tenure standards are being enforced across all UNL colleges and that they have been applied appropriately to the candidate.
  - b. As part of this review, the EVC is encouraged to discuss problematic cases with the appropriate administrator or faculty committee before making a recommendation.
  - c. The EVC then writes an email to the candidate, chair and dean regarding their decision. A hard copy letter is sent to the candidate only.
  - d. If the EVC recommends against promotion and/or tenure, candidates must be informed in writing of the recommendation and of their rights to have a written statement of the EVC's reasons for the adverse recommendation, to request a reconsideration by the EVC, and, regarding promotion nominations, to initiate an appeal to the Chancellor. Upon receiving this written notification, the candidate has five (5) working days in which to request the EVC's reasons, request a reconsideration by the EVC, and submit a rebuttal argument to the EVC. A candidate who receives a positive decision from the EVC has five (5) working days in which to review and comment on the EVC's written notification.
    - 1) REGARDING PROMOTION. If a negative recommendation has been made by the EVC and any one of the reviewing parties (i.e., the department faculty committee, the chair/director, the A&S Promotion and Tenure Committee, or the Dean), the process ends. However, the candidate, the department faculty, and the Dean each have the right to appeal to the Chancellor. The EVC must report a negative recommendation to these reviewing parties and inform them of their right to appeal to the Chancellor if the process ends.



- 2) REGARDING TENURE. All tenure nominations are forwarded to the Chancellor, regardless of the decisions at the College and EVC levels.

### **Chancellor Consideration**

16. The Chancellor makes the final decision to award or not to award promotion or tenure. If the Chancellor decides against promotion or tenure, the EVC will transmit the Chancellor's decision in writing to the Dean, department(s), and candidate.
  - a. Candidates must be informed in writing that they may ask the Chancellor for the reasons for the negative decision and for a reconsideration by the Chancellor. The candidate has five (5) working days upon receipt of the Chancellor's notification in which to ask for the Chancellor's reasons for the adverse decision, request a reconsideration, and submit rebuttal arguments to the Chancellor. As with the earlier reconsiderations, it is expected that this reconsideration will be done as expeditiously as possible. Candidates who receive positive decisions from the Chancellor have five (5) working days upon receipt of the Chancellor's letter to review, object to, and respond to it.
  - b. A revision to Section 4.5 of the Bylaws passed by the Board of Regents on October 25, 1996, states that the written standards of every campus regarding the awarding of promotion and tenure "shall not include any right of appeal to the Board of Regents, and to the extent that any such existing standards do include any provision providing for appeal to the Board of Regents, each such provision is hereby repealed." Thus, there is no right to appeal a negative decision by the Chancellor on promotion and/or tenure to the Board of Regents.
  - c. The EVC informs candidates whether they have been promoted and/or awarded tenure.

### **Procedural Concerns**

- If, at any point in a review, candidates think that these procedures are not being followed, they may seek redress through discussions with responsible administrators. If the issue involves an alleged violation of an individual's academic freedom, the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee is empowered to investigate the allegations.
- No procedural delays shall prevent a tenure recommendation involving notice of non-renewal from being submitted to the appropriate University administrative officer in time for action by the appropriate deadline for notice of non-renewal. However, timely notice of non-renewal from the University in such circumstances shall not preclude either the completion of the appropriate review process or the later submission of a different recommendation to the Chancellor, if the review results so warrant.