

# New York University Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth the core principles and procedures for tenure and promotion at New York University.<sup>1</sup> They are designed to support high academic standards in awarding tenure and promotion, and to insure a comprehensive, rigorous, and fair review of the candidates. The successful implementation of the guidelines to achieve and maintain high academic standards depends on the leadership of the deans, the provost and the president working in conjunction with the tenured faculty.

## 2. UNIVERSITY APPROVAL, SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Each school<sup>2</sup> at New York University must establish its own detailed guidelines for promotion and tenure, consistent with its own culture. These school guidelines must conform to each of the University-wide general guidelines described in this document. These school guidelines must contain a detailed, comprehensive, and fair set of procedures which will enable the school to perform rigorous and effective reviews of candidates for tenure and/or promotion. These school guidelines must appear in a document that is readily available in print, in electronic media and on the web, to all members of the school.

These school guidelines, and any subsequent changes to them, must be presented to the Provost of New York University for approval, and the Provost should consult with the FSC prior to making the final decision about such changes. A sample template of guidelines will be made available to each school – guidelines which will be sufficient and, should the school elect to use them, be automatically approved.

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<sup>1</sup> Nothing in these guidelines should be deemed to alter the text of the University policy statements on academic tenure currently printed on pages 21 through 45 of the Faculty Handbook (2008 ed.). In case of conflict with these guidelines, the text of the Faculty Handbook will take precedence.

<sup>2</sup> Herein the term “School” is taken to include the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences and the Institute of Fine Arts.

The guidelines for promotion and tenure within the Division of Libraries may depart from the University-wide guidelines to the extent necessary to reflect that Libraries faculty do not generally teach credit courses for students and that their contributions to knowledge in their field may not take the form or extent of scholarly research and publication expected in other academic fields.

### **3. STANDARDS**

A high standard of excellence and effectiveness in teaching in the context of a research university is a prerequisite for tenure at NYU, as is the promise of effective contributions toward the work of the individual's department or school and the intellectual life of the University. Once these prerequisites are met, outstanding scholarship or creative work in the arts is the requirement for tenure. Thus, in order to have a reasonable prospect of gaining tenure at NYU, a candidate must have a record of outstanding achievement and recognition in scholarly research or creative work in the arts together with a record of effective teaching integrally influenced by scholarship or creative work. In the absence of such a record, tenure will not be granted.

The process of evaluating a candidate for tenure is an inquiry: Is the candidate for tenure among the strongest in his or her field, in comparison with other individuals in the same field at similar points in their careers, taking into consideration the goals of the department?

#### **Standards and Process for Promotion to Full Professor**

The inquiry for promotion to full professor is essentially the same as for a tenure candidate: is the candidate for promotion among the strongest in her/his field, in comparison with individuals at similar points in their careers? In addition, the candidate must have achieved a significant milestone or marker beyond the work considered at the point of awarding tenure. The normal expectation will be that the new work mark significant new scholarly research or artistic achievement since the conferring of tenure. The docket must clearly indicate which work distinguishes the candidate's achievements since the last review for promotion.

It is neither desirable nor possible to define an abstract and universal standard of measurement for tenure and promotion. Each case must be examined in detail by making explicit comparisons, by delineating special strengths, and by acknowledging limits or weaknesses. Context may be a criterion in judging the strength of a particular candidate. All these factors must be carefully discussed and weighed in reaching a recommendation on tenure or promotion.

#### **Departmental Reviews: Stage I**

##### **Departmental responsibilities**

The duty of the tenured faculty to give advice on tenure and promotion decisions is perhaps their highest responsibility. The process begins with their review, and it is highly dependent upon their thoroughness, fairness, and rigor. To give weak advice to the Dean on the assumption that the difficult decisions will be made at a later stage subverts the principle of peer review and faculty governance and is an abdication of departmental responsibility. A report that is considered by the Dean or Promotion and Tenure Committee to fall into this category will be returned to the department with a request that the problem be corrected.

An assessment must not ignore candidates' defects. Lack of perfection is not a bar to promotion or tenure, and "advocacy" assessments that attempt to gloss over imperfections are more likely to arouse suspicion than admiration. It is far more helpful to the candidate, the School P&T Advisory Committee, and the Dean to have a balanced discussion of a candidate's strengths and weaknesses.

It is essential that tenured faculty members who participate in the P&T process uphold high standards of responsibility and ethical behavior. Responsibility includes the obligation to give careful attention to the materials of a tenure case and to share the results of that deliberation with eligible departmental colleagues. Ethical behavior includes a clear obligation to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings, since confidentiality makes honest and open discussion possible.

### **Departmental Review: Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee**

The Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee (or its counterpart in small schools)<sup>3</sup> must carry out a review of the candidate.<sup>4</sup> This committee may be appointed by the department chair, or it may be elected, following traditional practice in the department or school. Departments may establish ad hoc committees for each promotion and tenure case, or they may establish a single committee each year to review all cases. In either case, the committee must consist of only tenured members of the department of appropriate rank. The committee must have at least three such members. If the department does not have three tenured members, the committee should include appropriate tenured members from other departments of the school. It is the responsibility of the Promotion and Tenure Committee to assemble the relevant materials, to review them in detail, and to prepare a written report to the chair with a recommendation in favor or against the promotion and/or tenure of the candidate. The numerical vote of the Committee must also be contained in the report.

Depending on the P&T rules of the department or the school, the report and recommendation of the P&T committee may be presented to the tenured department faculty of appropriate rank for a vote, or may be passed on to the chair of the department or, in a school without a departmental structure, directly to the dean. In the case where the entire tenured faculty is eligible to vote, a reasonable effort must be made to enable eligible faculty to receive all relevant materials and to participate in the discussions and vote, and the vote of the faculty must be reported to the Dean by the chair of the department. The Chair of the Department must then forward the written recommendation and numerical vote of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, together with the names of the Promotion and Tenure Committee members and their method of selection, his/her own evaluation and recommendation, and in cases where a departmental vote is taken, the numerical vote of the eligible tenured faculty of the department.

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<sup>3</sup> Herein the term "department" is taken to mean "department or its counterpart in small schools".

<sup>4</sup> In cases where lateral tenured appointments are recommended by a committee other than the departmental promotion and tenure committee, the departmental promotion and tenure committee shall also review the appointment for tenure and rank utilizing the same standards and procedures for internal candidates.

## **Materials from the Departmental P&T Committee**

The Departmental P&T Committee must prepare a Promotion and Tenure docket for examination by eligible departmental voters and for subsequent forwarding to the Dean and Provost. This docket must begin with an assessment of the prerequisites:

The candidate's teaching performance and teaching potential within the context of a research university, together with supporting evidence and documentation, in the form of a teaching portfolio, which may include:

- Candidate's statement of his/her teaching philosophy
- Course syllabi
- Student evaluations
- Reports of peer observations, including formal assessments of teaching effectiveness
- List of advisees (graduate and undergraduate)
- List of PhD dissertation direction
- List of MS, MA, MFA thesis direction
- List of PhD committees

The candidate's service record and potential contributions toward the work of the department and the intellectual life of the University and the academic community.

Once these prerequisites as reflected in teaching are met, tenure will be judged and granted on the basis of outstanding achievement and recognition in scholarly research and/or creative work in the arts. As evidence for such, the docket must include:

- Current curriculum vitae
- Candidate's personal statement (recommended, but optional)
- Copies of the candidate's scholarly work (and where appropriate, as in the case of exhibitions, descriptions of the work)
- Evidence of the quality of the scholarly and creative work as appropriate. For example:
  - Academic book reviews
  - Readers' reviews of unpublished books
  - Citation analysis
  - Published reviews of productions or performances
  - Videos, published art work, screenplays, etc.
- Assessment of the candidate's scholarly research or artistic work
- Assessment of the candidate's teaching, as influenced and shaped by his/her scholarly and/or artistic work.
- Copy of candidate's Third-Year Review
- A list of evaluators, together with their scholarly credentials and an explanation for why they were chosen.

At least five (5) letters of evaluation from highly qualified external evaluators. These five letters must be from evaluators who are not scholars with whom the candidate has been closely associated, such as a dissertation or thesis advisor, co-author<sup>5</sup>, or other close associates. Nor can they be scholars that have been suggested by the candidate to serve as evaluators. If the department inadvertently solicits an opinion from someone it later learns is close to the candidate, this must be noted in the departmental report. The department may also choose to include additional letters from outside evaluators that have been suggested by the candidate or who are co-authors or the thesis advisor of the candidate, provided that this information is clearly noted in the docket. The University's policy regarding the confidentiality of such external letters and other tenure decision materials is found in Section C of the statement on Legal Protection for Faculty Members, Faculty Handbook (1999 ed.) p.85.

Report of the Departmental P&T Committee

Recommendation of the Departmental Chair

The evaluation by the P&T Committee must not be an advocacy document; it must strive to provide a fair assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate. It must indicate, with reasons, the basis for the departmental recommendation.

## **Dean's Review: Stage II**

The Dean<sup>6</sup> of the School is responsible for evaluating the docket presented by the department and making a recommendation to the Provost. The Dean is generally expected to solicit additional letters of evaluation, and/or to consult an advisory committee on Promotion and Tenure consisting of a sufficient number of full professors. Such a committee may be either appointed by the dean or elected by the school faculty or may be a combination of the two.

The Dean will inform the Department Chair of his/her own proposed recommendation to the Provost and the Chair will promptly inform the faculty member of the Dean's recommendation. In the case of a Dean's recommendation contrary to that of the department, the Dean will also provide the Chair with the reasons and give the chair an opportunity to provide further information or counter-argument before the Dean's final recommendation is made to the Provost.

The Dean will ordinarily make his or her recommendation to the Provost by [date]. This constitutes the definitive recommendation of the school and will be accompanied by the docket, departmental recommendation and (if any) the School Promotion and Tenure Advisory Committee recommendation.

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<sup>5</sup> Co-authors will be acceptable reviewers only in certain fields, such as fields with very small membership or fields in which papers typically have a large number of authors (i.e. multicenter clinical trials; large epidemiology studies, etc.), and then only acceptable with permission of the Dean.

<sup>6</sup> Herein the designation of "Dean" will include the Director of the Courant Institute and the Director of the Institute of Fine Arts.

### **Provostial Review: Stage III**

The Provost shall evaluate each tenure and promotion docket and recommendation submitted by the Deans. In evaluating a promotion or tenure recommendation submitted by a Dean, the Provost may solicit additional information and/or letters of evaluation, and may in unusual cases appoint an ad-hoc advisory committee composed of tenured faculty to seek further counsel.

The Provost shall support or oppose the Dean's recommendation in his/her final decision. The Provost will inform the Dean of his/her pending decision. In those cases in which that the Provost's decision will be contrary to the recommendation of the Dean, the Provost will provide the Dean with the reasons and give the Dean an opportunity to provide further information or counter-argument before the Provost's final decision. The Provost shall notify the Dean of the final decision, along with reasons thereof if the Dean's recommendation is disapproved.

Upon notification of the Provost's decision, the Dean will write to the Department Chair and to the candidate informing them of the decision.

### **Guidelines for Appeal**

In the event of a negative decision, the candidate has the right to file a grievance in accordance with the provisions of the University's Faculty Grievance Procedures appearing at pp. 56-58 of the Faculty Handbook (2008 ed.).

### **Tenure Clock**

The tenure clock for faculty is set forth in formal University rules adopted by the Board of Trustees. The current rules are found in the University's statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure, Title I and II reprinted in the Faculty Handbook (2008 ed.) at pp. 21-31.