

QUESTIONS ABOUT PROMOTION AND TENURE

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

1. Are there any guidelines anywhere that are more specific to promotion to the rank of professor?

Follow the [Guidelines for Promotion & Tenure](#) and the departmental criteria documents. Seek advice from your department head and from senior professors in your department who have undergone the process.

2. Can you give any specific advice for preparing the dossier for promotion to the rank of professor?

With one exception, there is no fundamental difference between the dossiers of candidates for promotion to associate and to full professor. The [Guidelines](#) call for the Third Year Review to be included in the associate professor candidate dossier—that document is not required for the full professor candidate dossier. Because the standards for promotion to full professor are higher than for promotion to associate professor, candidates for full professor must demonstrate “national or international recognition in their fields and the likelihood of maintaining that stature” ([Guidelines](#), IV, “Requirements for Ranks”). The dossier should therefore be prepared so as to demonstrate that standing.

3. For promotion to professor, should I solicit letters from colleagues and students about my teaching?

Do not over-value letters from colleagues and students. In general, letters from colleagues are of limited value since the departmental vote, the head’s cover letter, and the external assessments reflect the judgment of colleagues inside the university and in the profession. A limited number of student letters can be included, but other evidence of accomplishments in teaching and scholarship (and service) should be included as well. Committees tend to weigh evidence of good teaching such as student and peer evaluations more heavily than they do student letters. Refer to the [Guidelines](#) under “III. Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure” for extensive ways that teaching, research, and service can be documented. If letters from colleagues or students are desired, the department head should solicit them.

4. Does the vita in a dossier for promotion to Professor have to be in the same format as a vita in the dossier for promotion to Associate Professor?

Yes. We recommend the format in the “[Administrative Guidelines](#).” (go to section “I”)

5. Does the vita need to comply with a format?

Yes. We recommend the format in the “[Administrative Guidelines](#).” (section “I”)

6. The procedures and, especially, timelines for promotion of [lecturers](#) and [academic professionals](#) are not as clear as those for tenured and tenure-track faculty. What are the essential points for these other promotions?

I will handle these questions on an individual basis: please contact me by phone or e-mail. The dossier for promotion of [lecturers](#) and [academic professionals](#) is similar to that for P-T candidates. The approval process for these candidates is also similar to that for P-T candidates.

7. What should be included in the packet sent to external evaluators?

This is a matter to be decided by the dept head and candidate, and on the basis of departmental practice. Some depts. will send a few items to an assessor particularly suited to assess them. Others will send comprehensive set of items. Sometimes assessors will ask to see particular items or the statement of major accomplishments—be sure to provide them.

8. Since external evaluations are written during the summer, is it permissible for the PTU head to contact the evaluators by email or phone to inquire if they are available to do an evaluation in order to secure a list of possible evaluators? Many faculty members travel, especially abroad, during the summer and it may be difficult to reach them.

Yes, it is permissible to do this. Keep a record of all communications. You may want to follow up phone calls with paper or electronic correspondence. You can receive e-mailed assessments (letterhead is preferable, but these can be e-mailed in PDF form).

9. Is the statement of major accomplishments intended to be five very specific items selected from the vita or five categories of accomplishments that summarize in narrative form the highlights of the vita?

The statement does not need to list a specific number of accomplishments or achievements. The current [Guidelines](#) call for a candidate’s statement of “Major Accomplishments” (two-page maximum) to be included in the dossier immediately after the vita. This document is “a letter no longer than two pages that describes the candidate's major accomplishments and assesses the impact of each. Identify with an asterisk to the left of the entry those media, exhibitions and performances that are of national or international standing.” (**Appendix C: Outline -- Dossier for Promotion and/or Tenure**).

10. If the candidate includes associate professors on the list of external evaluators, should the candidate be advised to revise the list?

Definitely. The most credible and persuasive assessors will be full professors.

11. In the cover letter to the external evaluators, is it permissible to highlight (with bold or underline) that they are being asked to evaluate the scholarly research/creative activity [only]; and that the evaluation is "relative to outstanding people in the same field at approximately the same stage of the development of the career"?

I would not do this. The language is clear enough without adding emphasis, which could create confusion.

12. What are the required minimum and maximum numbers of outside letters?

According to the current *Guidelines*, there should be at least four external evaluations. There is no maximum number of external letters, but too many letters may become redundant and counter-productive. All letters obtained, whether positive or negative, must be included in the dossier. Be sure to keep in balance the number of letters obtained from the candidate's list of external assessors and the department's list.

13. Should the external evaluators be asked to submit a resume with the evaluation?

This should not be necessary. It is difficult enough to get faculty to agree to write letters of assessment. Information should be available on the Web from departmental websites. You should know something about the evaluators' credentials before asking them to provide evaluations.

14. How many external letters do I need to obtain from names suggested by the candidate?

The *Guidelines* state: "The candidate constructs a list of up to six potential external evaluators and their qualifications as reviewers. The PTU head must select and include in the dossier letters of evaluation from at least two of the candidate's designated external reviewers and will inform the candidate in writing when the letters have arrived. The candidate also constructs a list of no more than three individuals who may not be contacted as external evaluators, and the head of the promotion/tenure unit and other eligible voting faculty in the unit may not contact these individuals about the candidate's promotion and/or tenure review. The dossier must also include at least two letters from individuals not on the candidate's approved list. If one or two of the external evaluators cannot or do not respond, another letter may be requested, maintaining a balance of letters from the candidate's list of letters and from the PTU's list. *All letters of evaluation must be included in the dossier.*" See *Guidelines*, Section VII.A., "Preparing for Promotion and/or Tenure Unit Evaluation."

15. What guidelines should P-T candidates follow when suggesting potential writers of external assessments? Obviously the PhD mentor is inappropriate, but what about one-time or occasional collaborators, people who have been discussants on symposia, etc.

Candidates should avoid suggesting the names of individuals whom they've had sustained relationships with over a period of time—former teachers, collaborators, editors. On the other hand, individuals that candidates have met at conferences, served with on panels, and otherwise briefly interacted with can be appropriate choices.

16. Should the student evaluations, letters from peers, and letters from students be included in the exhibits, or should some be included in the 25 pages?

These items would go in the achievements section which, along with the vita, cannot exceed 25 pages in length. Letters from students and peers should be limited in number. In general, letters from colleagues are of limited value since the departmental vote, the head's cover letter, and external assessments reflect the judgment of colleagues inside the university and in the profession. Peer evaluations of teaching can be included. In general, include the strongest evidence available for a candidate's accomplishments in assigned areas of responsibility. Do not over-rely on letters from students and colleagues—other kinds of evidence can be much stronger. Exhibits are no longer used. If desired a single web link to exhibits can be made in the CV or at the end of the "Major Accomplishments" statement in section IV but this is not required. Be aware that committee members are not required to review exhibits and supplementary materials linked in the dossier.

17. May I submit materials not included in the dossier?

No. All evidence must be included in the dossier. If desired a single web link to exhibits can be made in the CV or at the end of the "Major Accomplishments" statement in section IV but this is not required. Be aware that committee members are not required to review exhibits and supplementary materials linked in the dossier.

18. What is the relationship between the two-page letter that is appended to the vita and the "five accomplishments," or "achievements," which I find only one reference to in the *Guidelines*?

In the current Guidelines, the achievements statement replaces the "five accomplishments" statement from the former Guidelines.

19. Should the "Statement of Accomplishments" cover the candidate's entire career, or should it cover the period since the most recent appointment or promotion?

In general, promotion to full professor is based on accomplishments since the last promotion. The “Statement of Accomplishments” may reference items prior to the last promotion, but the primary focus should be on items since the last promotion.

20. What is the actual page limit for the dossier? It varies in the documentation from 25-35 pages.

The vita and achievements sections should be no more than 25 pages in length. The rest of the dossier is not subject to that limit. However, it is advisable to prepare a carefully organized dossier that contains the required elements and that is no longer than necessary.

21. About Post-Tenure Review: What is the college and/or university timeline for contacting faculty that they will be coming up for post-tenure review? The spring semester before they come up, the summer before, or the beginning of the fall in the year of the review?

See the University “Policy for Review of Tenured Faculty” (available under “Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure” on the Provost’s web site) as well as your departmental policy on post-tenure review for this information.

The department is responsible for maintaining a list of faculty scheduled for post-tenure review.