Best Practices

Promotion and/or Tenure

4th Year Pre-Tenure

Post-Tenure

Review

UNAC Represented Faculty

University of Alaska Fairbanks

**Introduction**

* The aim of this document is to provide guidance for faculty who are eligible to stand for tenure and/or promotion, and to faculty serving in the unit-peer and/or university-wide review processes.
* It is also intended to provide guidance to department chairs, deans, and directors.

This document represents guidance and advice rather than official UAF policy. The standards and procedures mandated for the tenure and/or promotion review processes are described in the following official documents:

* UA Policy and University Regulation
* UAF Policies and Regulations for the Appointment and Evaluation of Faculty (the “Blue Book”)
* Approved Unit Criteria, if applicable
* The United Academics – AAUP/AFT Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

The best practices described here cover both the period leading up to the recommendation for promotion or tenure and the procedures to be followed during the year in which the promotion and/or tenure file is sent forward.

* “Candidate” refers to a faculty member undergoing promotion and/or tenure review.

**Best Practices for Faculty Undergoing Review**

# The Probationary Years

*Expectations for Tenure and Promotion of Tenure-Track Faculty*

* Expectations for tenure and promotion should be discussed informally with the candidate’s mentor(s), department chair, and dean/director soon after hire and in the context of annual reviews.
* General expectations for tenure and promotion regarding teaching, research/ scholarly/creative work, and service are contained in the official documents listed above, particularly the *UAF Polices and Regulations for the Appointment and Evaluation of Faculty*; specific and supplementary expectations are found in approved unit criteria (please note: not all units have specific unit criteria). Some expectations may be stated in quantitative terms (number of books or articles published, juried exhibitions, committee assignments, etc.).
* Expectations may also be described qualitatively.
* There are a number of possible combinations of accomplishments that might be acceptable for tenure and promotion.
* The sooner a new tenure-track faculty member acquaints him or herself with the expectations of the process, the better the quality of presentation in a file years into the future. It is important to have early and annual discussions with mentor(s), the department chair and the dean/director.

*Initial Appointment and Mandatory Tenure Review*

* Faculty initially appointed at the rank of assistant professor must be reviewed for tenure and promotion no later than during their seventh consecutive year of tenure-track service; i.e., submission at the beginning of the seventh year for an award of tenure at the end of the seventh year.
* At UAF, the award of tenure and advancement to the associate professor rank are linked and are done concurrently in the vast majority of cases. Faculty who are initially appointed at the rank of associate professor must be reviewed no later than during their fourth consecutive year of service.
* Faculty initially appointed at the rank of professor must be reviewed no later than during their second consecutive year of service.

Faculty who fail to receive tenure during their mandatory year are given a terminal contract for the following year. Employment in a faculty position may not continue beyond that terminal year.

It is advisable that candidates consult with their dean/director and department chair before submitting a tenure and promotion file prior to their mandatory year.

*Starting the “Tenure Clock”*

* The “tenure clock” is the calculated date of the mandatory year of tenure for all tenure-track faculty.
* The mandatory date of tenure should be recorded on the faculty member’s annual contract letter.
* The tenure “clock” starts for a faculty member the first year of hire, usually at the beginning of the fall semester.
* Faculty who start mid-year (usually later than end of November or more typically some time in the spring semester) may choose when their “clock” begins. Faculty may choose to count the academic year during which they were hired as year one, or they may choose to count the following academic year as year one. This decision must be made at the time of hire, written in the contract letter, and may not be changed.

## Extensions of the Probationary Period – Stopping/Resetting the “Tenure Clock”

* Faculty are entitled to take leave for medical or personal reasons. In such cases, the probationary period before mandatory tenure review may be extended.
* All agreements regarding changes to the probationary period (i.e., temporarily stopping a “tenure clock”) must be documented in writing at the beginning of the leave process and have the approval of the dean and/or director and the provost.
* The provost is the final authority.

**Types of Review**

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| **Type of Review** | **Applies to** |
| Annual Evaluation  | All Faculty\* |
| Annual Activities Reporting | All faculty at UAF |
| Fourth Year Comprehensive Review | All tenure-track faculty at UAF |
| Tenure concurrent with promotion to associate professor | All tenure-track faculty at UAF who have initial appointment as assistant professor |
| Tenure only | All tenure-track faculty at UAF who have initial appointment as associate professor or professor |
| Promotion only  | Any tenure-track faculty member or special academic rank faculty member |
| Comprehensive Post-Tenure Review | Every sixth post-tenure year, faculty will be reviewed by the faculty member’s unit peer committee, dean and/ or director. If necessary, the file will also be reviewed by the university-wide committee and the provost. |

\***NOTE: Per CBA 2017-2019**

9.2.1 Annual Activity Report/Review

* UNAC members subject to review will follow processes and procedures for file preparation as outlined in this Article and MAU-specific guidelines.
* Evaluation of UNAC members shall be conducted annually by the dean, director or designee. The UNAC member shall submit, by September 12 a current CV and Annual Activity Report including a brief self-evaluation narrative unless the UNAC member is undergoing a fourth-year comprehensive review, tenure review, promotion review, or post tenure review. The UNAC member may submit additional documentation at his or her discretion. The dean, director, or designee may consider additional information contained within the UNAC member’s academic record file and other files as defined in Article 12.2.
* The dean, director, or designee of the respective academic unit(s) will provide by January 15 a brief written statement regarding whether the UNAC member’s performance was satisfactory or unsatisfactory unless the UNAC member is receiving a fourth-year comprehensive review, tenure review, promotion review, or post tenure review.

***4TH YEAR PRE-TENURE Comprehensive and Diagnostic Review***

The fourth year comprehensive and diagnostic review provides a valuable opportunity for broad-based feedback on progress made towards tenure and promotion. The content and organization of a fourth year review file is similar to that of the promotion-tenure file. However, external review letters are not solicited for the comprehensive and diagnostic review process.

There are some critical points regarding the fourth year comprehensive and diagnostic review. Faculty and administration alike should become familiar with the language in the CBA and UAF policies.

* Fourth year comprehensive and diagnostic reviews are not optional.
* The purpose of the review is to assess progress toward tenure and promotion.
* Fourth year comprehensive and diagnostic review proceeds only to the level of the provost, unless the candidate specifically requests that the chancellor review the file.
* A unit member who commences a fourth year review may not convert to promotion or tenure review.
* If a candidate chooses to stand for promotion and tenure during the year he or she would normally have participated in a fourth year review, the candidate MAY NOT withdraw the file from consideration at any step in the process.
* If a candidate chooses to stand for promotion and tenure review in what normally would have been a candidate’s fourth review year, and the decision of the chancellor is to deny tenure, the candidate may continue to serve as a tenure-track unit member but **MAY NOT** stand again for promotion/tenure until the mandatory year of review.

***Tenure Review Prior to the Mandatory Year***

Exceptional accomplishments may provide grounds for a review prior to the mandatory year. It is advisable that faculty and administration become very familiar with CBA and UAF Policy language regarding review prior to the mandatory year.

* Faculty may choose to stand for tenure after at least one year of tenure-track appointment at the university, but must do so prior to, or during, the mandatory seventh year.
* Faculty may withdraw their candidacy file from consideration at any step in the process prior to review by the chancellor, except in the fourth year for UNAC-represented faculty.
* If the file continues to the chancellor and if the decision of the chancellor is to deny tenure, the faculty member may continue to serve as a tenure track faculty member but MAY NOT stand again for tenure prior to the mandatory year of service.

*Promotion from Associate Professor to Full Professor*

It is good practice for the faculty member to discuss progress towards promotion from associate professor to professor with the department chair, senior colleagues, and their dean and/or director. A faculty member denied promotion to full professor may not reapply for promotion for at least one year from the date of the chancellor’s decision.

NOTE: Faculty members who elect to stand for promotion to full professor during their required comprehensive post-tenure review year must undergo BOTHreview types.

**Preparing a File for Review:**

* Instructions for file preparation are located on the Provost’s website, <http://www.uaf.edu/provost/>, sorted by review type.
* When assembling materials for your electronic file, remember that reviewers outside the peer-unit will have many files to review. It is better to provide reprints or clean photocopies of journal articles and chapters in edited books, rather than copies of the entire journal issue or books themselves.
* The file should include all accomplishments covering the review period, up to the time the file is submitted for review.

There are a variety of formats and range of content for successful promotion and tenure files. It is very helpful to look at models and is a good idea for faculty members to review available successful tenure and promotion files.

Easy-to-read review files have these characteristics:

* well-organized with tabs (having followed the directions);
* clearly marked;
* explanations that can be understood by all reviewers, not just those in the candidate’s discipline;
* materials that support claims of accomplishment;
* inclusion of examples of abstracts or other written work; and
* self-evaluation narratives that focus on the impact of the candidate’s efforts and accomplishments (including explanations of the candidate’s role in any collaborative endeavors).

Some common elements in an unsuccessful file are:

* missing materials;
* poor organization (did not follow directions);
* voluminous, with excessive text and/or extraneous supplementary materials that do not pertain to the criteria;
* sparse, with insufficient documentation to support claims of accomplishment and excellence;
* failure to address issues raised in recommendations from earlier stages in the review;
* excessive repetition; and
* self-evaluation narratives that simply summarize activities rather than assess their significance and impact.

**Specific Parts of the File**

*External Review Letters*

* The function of the external letters is to assist promotion and tenure review committees in making a judgment about the strength of the file.
* **External review letters shall be requested for tenure and/or promotion files only, and are not requested for fourth year comprehensive review or post-tenure review files.**
* If faculty are requested by the dean and/or director to select reviewers, it is good practice for faculty to select persons with a national or international reputation who can speak to their file. It is generally considered better not to ask relatives, close friends, your major professor, or anyone else who might not be objective in the review process. That said, it is not necessary for the candidate and the reviewer to be completely unknown to one another.
* In addition to the two names the faculty member provides, the dean or director may select up to two additional reviewers. The dean or director will contact external reviewers on your behalf.
* Faculty at or above the rank to which the candidate is seeking promotion generally make the best external reviewers. In some cases, however, reviewers in non-academic positions may be better placed to evaluate the significance of a candidate’s work, in which case it is particularly important to establish their credentials in the file. Deans and/or directors are responsible for sending the candidate’s CV to the external reviewers.
* Candidates typically select external reviewers who are outside of the University of Alaska system, to allow an objective judgment.
* If a candidate selects an external reviewer who is within the UA system, the candidate should consider how this might be perceived by those who will be reviewing their file.
* When applied research is part of the file for tenure and/or promotion, the file is supported through evidence of the impact of the research, whether local, regional, or national. Depending on the nature of the applied research, this evidence may include letters from people able to assess its impact.

*Non-evaluative or Support Letters*

* Non-evaluative or support letters may be appropriate to explain aspects of a candidate’s work rather than to evaluate it. For example, if a significant number of publications derive from a long-term collaboration with another researcher, it would be useful to include a letter from the collaborator describing the candidate’s role in that research program. Such letters are usually requested by the candidate and should be placed separately from letters of evaluation and their role in the file clearly explained.
* Do not simply include them without explanation. Only the candidate may place such letters in the file. If not included when the file is first submitted, these letters may be placed in the file during the comment period after any level of review.

*Late or Other Materials for Inclusion in the File*

* Reports on progress for items that are referenced in the file as “in progress,” (e.g. manuscripts, and grant proposals in review). This can be, for example, formal notice of approval or acceptance of a grant proposal may only be submitted by the candidate at those times in the review schedule when the candidate is explicitly provided an opportunity to respond to recommendations by a committee or individual reviewer.
* Other materials, such as letters of support, awards, honors or appointments that have occurred since the file was submitted may only be submitted by the candidate at those times in the review schedule when the candidate is explicitly provided an opportunity to respond to recommendations by a committee or individual reviewer.
* In response to comments in any recommendation by a committee or individual reviewer, the candidate may include a variety of materials that support his or her replies to items noted in that recommendation.
* Evaluators’ comments may include relevant documents related to evaluative statements.
* No other types of materials may be added.

**Progression of the File**

Once your completed file has been submitted to the director or dean’s office, it will progress through a process of successive levels of review.

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| Stage 1 | Candidate submits to dean and/or director CV and list of 2 external reviewers (promotion and tenure candidates only, if requested by the dean and/or director). |
| Stage 2 | Dean/director distributes CV to 2-4 external reviewers (if requested, for promotion and tenure candidates only). |
| Stage 3 | Candidate submits file to dean or director. |
| Stage 4 | The unit-peer review committee reviews file and submits recommendation to the dean or director. |
| Stage 5 | Candidate has opportunity to respond to dean and/or director regarding the unit-peer review committee recommendation. |
| Stage 6 | Dean and/or director reviews file and submits recommendation to the Office of the Provost. |
| Stage 7 | Candidate has opportunity to respond to the university-wide review committee regarding the dean and/or director comments. |
| Stage 8 | University-wide committee reviews file and submits recommendation to the provost. |
| Stage 9 | Candidate has opportunity to respond to the provost regarding the university-wide committee’s comments. |
| Stage 10 | Provost reviews file and makes recommendation to the chancellor. |
| Stage 11 | Candidate has opportunity to respond to the chancellor regarding the provost’s recommendation. |
| Stage 12 | Chancellor reviews files (tenure, promotion and those requested fourth year and post-tenure files) and makes final decision. |
| Stage 13 | There is no formal comment period to the Chancellor’s decision. |

*Comments by the Candidate to a Recommendation*

* The candidate has an opportunity to respond to the recommendations at each level of review, through the level of the provost.
* There is a limited window of response time as defined in the promotion-tenure review schedule. Minimally, the candidate should sign to acknowledge that he or she has received the recommendation.
* In addition, these are the only times at which the candidate may supplement materials in the file and/or respond to specific comments in the recommendation

**When the Process is Over**

*The Award of Tenure and Promotion*

* The award of tenure and promotion is effective July 1 of the year in which the process was completed.
* Salary increases due to promotion are applied the first full pay period in July.