



PROMOTION & TENURE GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY

UD ADVANCE INSTITUTE



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A. INTRODUCTION

This manual provides guidelines for faculty preparing for promotion and tenure (P&T) at the University of Delaware. These guidelines are based on panelist advice given at the annual UD ADVANCE P&T panels (2014 - present). Panelists represent a diversity of fields and include recently promoted faculty and members of departmental, college, and university P&T committees.

[Section 4.4](#) of the Faculty Handbook (FHB) covers many aspects of UD's faculty P&T process. Additional information can be found in departmental and college documents, which are posted on the [Provost's website](#). This manual supplements the information found in these official documents. The next section (B) provides pointers for faculty as they think ahead and plan for P&T. The following section (C) focuses on the elements that go into preparing the dossier and candidate statements. Section D covers various aspects related to the selection of external reviewers. The concluding section (E) includes specific guidelines for tenured faculty seeking promotion to full professor. Process-related questions should be directed to your department chair or to the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs' Office.

B. THINKING AHEAD: PLANNING FOR P&T

Applying for promotion is an involved process so it's important to start early. Here are some tips for getting started:

1. FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

- In addition to [Section 4.4](#) of the FHB, you should review your departmental and college documents (both of which can be found on the [Provost's website](#)).
- Be conscious of the temporary COVID-related P&T policies (FHB §4.4.18).

- Discuss these documents with your department chair, mentor(s), and/or other colleagues.

2. ESTABLISH A CLEAR TIMELINE

- The FHB deadline to notify your chair that you intend to seek promotion is April 30th. However, some departments have an earlier deadline. Check with your department in the event of a discrepancy.
- Materials for external letter writers are often due months before you submit your full dossier. Find out from your department when and what you will need to submit to the external evaluators.
- Plan and regularly revisit a timeline of professional projects; think strategically about how your commitments fit with your path to promotion.

3. KEEP CAREFUL RECORDS

- To serve as an aid for preparing your materials, maintain an updated list of your activities and accomplishments in the areas of research, teaching, and service.
- Be inclusive. In addition to the obvious, examples of other things you might include are a list of committees you've served on and a list of undergraduate and/or graduate students you've worked with and their project titles.

4. LEARN EVALUATION STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

- Your work will be evaluated largely on impact. Since impact can be measured in different ways, make sure you know the standards, metrics, and culture within your own department (grants, books, refereed articles, metrics, etc.).
- Learn as much as you can from others:
 - Seek samples of recent successful dossiers (within and outside of your department). Many faculty are willing to share their materials – just ask.
 - Discuss standards with your department chair and senior faculty members in your department.
 - Take advantage of university-sponsored events and resources ([UD ADVANCE panels & web resources](#), [UDFAP](#) peer mentoring and programs, [CT Caucus](#) and [CTAL](#) panels, etc.).
- Make the most of 2- and 4-year peer reviews. These provide a platform for establishing standards and for seeking out areas that may need to be addressed.

5. MAKE YOURSELF AND YOUR WORK KNOWN TO OTHERS

- Make your work known to potential letter writers early and often. You can be publicly visible in your field in ways that don't violate ethical concerns. For example:
 - Introduce yourself to top people in your field at conferences.
 - Organize conference sessions or symposia.
 - Invite senior colleagues from other universities to give seminars at UD.
 - Share your work with senior colleagues; tell them how their work influenced your way of thinking.
- Internal evaluation is also very important. Build bridges with senior colleagues. Make sure they know you and are familiar with your work.

C. PREPARING ONE'S DOSSIER AND CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Evaluators will be assessing the impact and the overall trajectory of your work. When planning for P&T and preparing your dossier, you should be asking yourself: What is the influence and value of your work to the department, college, university and profession? How will you continue to grow professionally after promotion?

All faculty dossiers must include candidate statements in the areas of teaching, research, and service. These statements provide an opportunity for you to articulate the significance of your work. Identify your "brand" and weave it into your dossier: Who are you as a scholar? A teacher? A member of the University community?

Below are some factors to consider as you plan and prepare your promotion materials.

1. NUTS AND BOLTS

- FHB [§4.4.11](#) describes the required elements of a UD promotion dossier. Note, however, that departmental documents or practices may not perfectly align with the FHB's recommended table of contents. Consult with your department if you have questions.
- In addition to separate research, teaching and service statements, all dossiers must include a workload statement (FHB [§4.4.5](#)) and a COVID-19 impact statement (FHB [§4.4.18](#)).
- For assistant professors, 2- and 4-year peer reviews are also required.

- Post-tenure reviews are an optional component for associate professors seeking promotion to full professor.
- If you took a tenure extension (e.g., stop the clock), you don't have to explain why. Just make note that you took the extension.
- You have the right to add to your dossier after it has been submitted. This is only appropriate if something has changed since the last review stage (e.g., a new grant or publication came in). Be sure to note the date of the submission of new materials so that it is clear which reviewers have (or have not) seen it.

2. PRESENTING YOUR CASE

- Make your dossier and statements as reader friendly as possible.
 - Your candidate statements should be brief and to the point. Use the sample dossiers you have collected as a guideline.
 - Use phrases that draw your reader's attention to key points ("This research is important because..." or "My innovations in teaching include..."). Letter writers sometimes use statements to guide or inform their own recommendations.
 - When appropriate, use graphs, charts, or tables to enhance your story.
 - Use bullet points to highlight key accomplishments and to break up the text.
 - Avoid technical jargon; write in a way that is understandable to faculty outside of your field.
 - Refer to more detailed information in appendices or elsewhere.
- Keep your audience in mind.
 - The P&T committees above the department may not know the culture of your discipline. Let them know which metrics and standards are appropriate for measuring impact in your discipline.
 - However you choose to articulate the impact of your work, contextualize it by explaining the significance of awards, publications, invited talks, etc.
 - If your work is interdisciplinary, describe it in a way that allows reviewers to see it as an integrated whole.
 - If you are using a different methodology or theoretical approach than most faculty in your department/field, explain why that methodology or approach is important for advancement in the field.
- Present an evidence-based argument for your research excellence

- Don't be shy about describing your accomplishments but do so by providing evidence. Leave it to others to translate your record into superlative language.
- For those whose work needs to show visuals and audio, a supplemental verifiable (Google) site is very useful. It is important here that you ensure that the site is confidential and that you cannot see who has access to it. Check with UD-IT.
- Avoid inadvertently including unanswered questions or doubt raisers.
 - Ensure that the information provided is accurate and that there are no inconsistencies.
 - Be clear about whether talks and papers are invited or blind-reviewed, etc.
 - Be clear about your level of contribution on co-authored works, collaborative grants, or projects. Speak with people in your department about what type of documentation might be expected.
 - If you have some sort of gap or lag in your progress toward promotion, explain the gap/lag rather than trying to hide it.
- Some ideas for documenting teaching and service impact
 - The teaching section of your dossier can cover a broad range of teaching activities and can use a number of different ways to measure excellence (rather than focusing solely on numerical ratings from student evaluations of teaching). See FHB [§4.4.11](#) for more details. [CTAL](#) is an excellent campus resource for teaching development and P&T preparation.
 - Your mentorship of students is another way to speak to your impact. How have you been helping students succeed? How has your research stimulated new research from your students? Provide a list of the professional placement of your students.
 - Show how you have developed as a teacher over time and changed course as needed. Committees are looking for progress and improvement. You don't have to be perfect.
 - Service needs to demonstrate that you are a good citizen. It should make you visible to others in your department/college/university.
 - Service can also be a way to demonstrate research or teaching impact – as, for example, when one is invited to be on an editorial board or review board for a prestigious grant.

- Don't assume that your reviewers know the level of work that goes into service responsibilities, teaching development, or other types of work. When appropriate, clarify the level of effort in your statement(s).
- Preparing your workload and Covid Impact Statements
 - If your workload hasn't changed over the years this can be very brief. If your workload has varied from year to year, your workload statement might be longer or include a table.
 - The department chairperson's evaluation letter must also describe your workload (FHB [§4.4.6](#)). Take steps to ensure the two statements are aligned.
 - Resources for writing and evaluating COVID-19 impact statements can be found on the [ADVANCE website](#).

D. EXTERNAL LETTER WRITERS

External letters are a critical element of the review process. They serve as an external measure of the impact of one's research and can go a long way towards a successful promotion case. Strong letters can be especially useful for those faculty whose research area or methods are unfamiliar to other members of the department.

The FHB ([§4.4.12](#)) provides a broad description of the process for selecting external reviewers. As part of the process, the candidate provides the departmental P&T committee with a list of potential letter writers. Some departments additionally require an explanation of why each person would be a good fit to evaluate the candidate's work. The candidate's list is supplemented with additional names of potential reviewers. The candidate has the right to comment on the additions, but it is the department that makes the final decision on who will be asked to write letters. Your department may have more specific guidelines with respect to this process. Talk to your department if you have questions.

Here is some more information to help you plan and prepare for this aspect of the process:

1. NUTS AND BOLTS

- Department documents sometimes specify the number of letters required. However, college norms might differ from what is specified in department documents. Ask your department what is expected.

- Find out from your department what materials are sent to letter writers as well as the deadline for sending these materials. For example,
 - In many departments, the letter writers often do not see a T/TT candidate's teaching and service materials.
 - It is not uncommon for candidates to include a research statement, workload statement, and a COVID impact statement – in addition to the other materials that they provide for the letter writers.

2. SELECTING POTENTIAL LETTER WRITERS

- It is useful to have letter writers from top ranking institutions, but pedigree is not all that matters. Letter writers should be selected from faculty at well-respected institutions who are widely recognized as experts in their field and who can speak to the impact of your work. Reviewers provide their own CV, which should be proof of their expertise in the field.
- The FHB indicates that reviewers must have rank at or above the rank being pursued. Do your best to err in the direction of full professors – and to align with departmental norms on this matter.
- Consider people who know your work, but don't have an association with you that may disqualify them. Committees like to see letters that say, "I've never actually met Dr. X, but I've seen her speak at conferences and she would be tenured at my institution." Find out from colleagues in your department and college what counts as appropriate interaction with prospective letter writers.
- Avoid listing multiple people from the same institution

E. FOR ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

In many ways, the P&T process is similar regardless of whether one is seeking tenure and promotion to associate professor or whether one is applying for full professor status. Yet, there are also some ways in which the path to full professor is unique. Below are some guidelines specific to tenured associate professors seeking promotion to full professor.

- When planning your path from associate to full professor, be mindful to align priorities and work with workload and promotion expectations. Try to avoid spending a lot of time doing work that is not heavily weighted in your assigned workload.

- Think of your path from assistant to associate to full professor as one big journey, not two separate journeys. Do your best to keep up the forward momentum between the two promotions.
- Evaluators are often looking for evidence demonstrating that you are a leader in your field – a scholar with national and often international prominence. To establish this level of prominence, consider the following.
 - Be professionally active in ways that allow you to secure a network of international colleagues.
 - Take on leadership roles in professional organizations, become a journal editor, etc.
 - Talk to your colleagues about other ways to demonstrate leadership in one's field.
- When deciding when to apply for promotion to full professor, seek feedback from colleagues about your readiness for promotion.
 - Post-tenure reviews can be a way of getting feedback on your dossier and your readiness for promotion. If you have not had a post-tenure review, get feedback from senior colleagues, your chair, or consider asking for a peer review at least a year before you go up for promotion.
 - There is no requirement that post-tenure reviews be included in dossiers for faculty seeking promotion to full professor.
 - If you get a negative review or other type of feedback, take the feedback seriously. Use it to decide whether you should wait to go up or whether this information is best used to inform your narratives.
 - Take the time you need to establish a clear, sensible, well-documented case. But don't delay unnecessarily.
 - If you perceive a lack of support from your department (members or P&T committee), keep in mind that committee memberships change and there are many levels of evaluation above the departmental P&T committee. Ultimately you are the one who knows best when you are ready.
 - While it is true that if you are denied, you can go up again, be mindful of the effects this might have on the process of securing strong letters from external reviewers.
- Is there a “too late” to go up for promotion?
 - Continued productivity does not mean that all years at rank have to be stellar. If there is a lull or plateau in your trajectory, ensure that it is explained and

emphasize that your trajectory is back on track. Support the latter with evidence of an upward trajectory in excellence and productivity.

- For faculty that came to UD as a nontenured associate professor who subsequently received tenure at UD, you are reviewed by your achievements in rank (not just since tenure).
- If you have had an administrative leadership role (associate chair, grad director, etc.), tell the committees the level of work/commitment associated with this role. They may not know.

GOOD LUCK ON YOUR PATH TO PROMOTION!