

**Proposed Revised Guidelines for Promotion to Full Professor**  
**SU ADVANCE**  
**January 2021**

The following document contains an excerpt of the existing Seattle University Handbook, plus our proposed revisions. Additions to the current Seattle University Faculty Handbook can be found in green font, deletions can be found in red font, and considerations and comments for the committee can be found in blue highlight and blue font. The unchanged flanking text from the current Handbook can be found in black font.

**V. Evaluation and Performance**

**A. Standards and Guidelines**

Each department, or comparable academic unit, has standards for faculty evaluation, reappointment, promotion, and tenure. Departmental standards are consistent with the Academic Rights, Duties, and Responsibilities and the Elements of Faculty Quality described in Sections II and III above. Departmental guidelines (or college or school guidelines for those areas without departmental guidelines) explain the annual evaluation process in detail. Guidelines relating to promotion and tenure include information such as notice of initiation of the review; portfolio materials the candidate should submit; steps in the process; timing; respective roles, as appropriate, of the departmental faculty, Department Chair, the Dean, and others; and the candidate's access to information about the process.

**B. Annual Evaluation**

With limited exceptions, all faculty members undergo an annual performance evaluation. The evaluation includes input from the faculty member, the chairperson or Dean, and students. It may include peer input. Although annual evaluations normally will provide evidence for decisions on reappointment, salary increases, and, as appropriate, promotion and tenure, an equally important purpose of the evaluation is developmental. Annual evaluations aid the individual in achieving and maintaining excellence as a faculty member. Growth in excellence and progress in correcting deficiencies will be major considerations in all personnel decisions.

In addition to annual evaluations, some tenure-track and tenured faculty undergo more intensive evaluations. These more intensive evaluations occur at the approximate mid-point of the probationary period (typically the third year), at the point of a tenure application, and at the point of a promotion application.

**C. Mid-Probationary Review for Tenure-Track Assistant Professor**

Tenure-track Assistant Professors undergo a formal review that typically occurs in the third year of appointment. The mid-probationary review is formative and evaluative; it informs the faculty member, in an evidence-based way, of the progress he or she is making toward tenure. It includes an assessment of teaching effectiveness, progress in establishing a program of research or scholarship in his or her field and service to the department, school, university, and profession. The summary results of the review shall be made available to the faculty member by his or her Dean. The report shall, at a minimum, state the recommended outcome, explain the reasons for the

recommendation, and offer any suggestions for future performance. Candidates shall have an opportunity to respond to the report.

The Provost makes final decisions concerning continuation of the appointment, upon authority delegated by the President. The Provost may consider, in addition to the candidate's quality, the University's future staffing needs, after consultation with the Dean and department chair. The Provost will communicate his or her decision to the Dean, who then will communicate the final decision to the faculty member in writing. If applicable, this communication will also specify the timetable and nature of the evaluative process leading to the next major, formal personnel review.

With the exception of documents submitted confidentially, the contents of the mid-probationary review file shall be available to the faculty member upon a written request to his or her Dean. He or she will be given opportunity to supplement the file for purposes of clarification.

All participants in the review process shall maintain responsible professional confidentiality.

A successful mid-probationary review does not guarantee candidates later consideration for tenure and promotion.

#### **D. Establishment of a Holistic Faculty Development Plan**

The post-tenure phase of a faculty member's career provides an opportunity to revisit, deepen, or reimagine professional goals and focus. Therefore, after earning tenure at Seattle University, faculty are required to prepare a Holistic Faculty Development Plan (HFDP). The HFDP describes the area(s) of faculty work that the faculty member intends to pursue more deeply and the ways in which stated professional goals link to the University's mission and contribute to relevant communities of practice internal or external to the University. While the development of a HFDP is a faculty-centered process, faculty are expected to consult with their department chair, program director, associate dean, dean's designee and/or dean. The HFDP will be finalized and adopted through mutual agreement of the faculty member and dean or dean's designee.

Faculty will develop their HFDP within two years of earning tenure at Seattle University. Faculty hired by Seattle University with a tenured appointment at the Associate Professor level must develop a HFDP at least two years before applying for promotion at Seattle University or as dictated in their faculty appointment contract. The development of a HFDP is required regardless of the faculty member's intent to apply for promotion to Professor.

The HFDP is generative and collaborative in nature and is intended to be responsive to faculty professional growth. Thus, the HFDP should be reviewed annually and may be modified. A faculty member's annual performance review provides an opportunity for ongoing formative mentorship that supports faculty progress in their adopted HFDP.

### **VI. Promotion and Tenure for Tenure-Track Faculty**

#### **A. Promotion and Tenure Criteria and Guidelines**

The criteria for granting promotion and tenure to faculty at Seattle University are governed by excellence in teaching, in research/scholarship (including community engaged scholarship and

creative work in the arts), in service to our students and the community, and in other professional achievements.

Each college or school has written guidelines established to evaluate faculty who apply for promotion and tenure. These guidelines must ensure a comprehensive and fair review of the candidate. While they are developed at the department or college or school level, in order to be consistent with the culture of the relevant discipline, these guidelines should conform to general university guidelines in this Handbook and be approved by the college or school (either by the faculty as a whole or by the relevant personnel review committee), the Dean, the University Rank and Tenure Committee, and the Provost. Promotion and tenure guidelines should include information such as the schedule of the review; the **portfolio** materials the candidate should submit; the steps in the process; timing of the evaluation; the respective roles, as appropriate, of the departmental faculty, Department Chair, the Dean, and others; the composition and voting procedures of the personnel committee; and the candidate's access to information about the process. Proposed amendments to the guidelines may be initiated by members of the faculty, Department Chairs, or appropriate constituents who are part of the approval process. Any subsequent changes to the guidelines will follow the same procedures engaged in the approval of the guidelines.

If amendments are approved, the new guidelines will be applied to new faculty hires and promotion decisions. For tenure-track faculty members hired before the new guidelines went into effect, they may choose to be considered under the old or the new guidelines when being evaluated for tenure or promotion. Tenured faculty being considered for promotion to full professor may choose to be considered under the old or new guidelines if the new guidelines went into effect within the last three years, subject to the timetable rules of their college or school. Department Chairs, academic directors or supervisors (if applicable), or Deans (in colleges or schools without departments) are responsible for informing their faculty of the current promotion and tenure guidelines.

The University will be guided in its appointments and promotions in academic rank by the qualifications of the individual concerned. Promotion, like tenure, is conferred only by an overt act on the part of the university. An initial academic appointment with tenure at Seattle University is rare. Recommendations for initial tenure must be submitted for review and recommendation following the promotion and tenure procedures described in Section VI.B.

The standard qualifications for promotion and tenure are as follows:

**a. Assistant Professor to Associate Professor**

- i. Possession of the earned doctorate or other terminal degree appropriate to the field.
- ii. Unless upon appointment the individual received credit for prior service, at least five years successful teaching as a ranked faculty member. The five years shall have been completed at the time of application for tenure.
- iii. Evidence of sustained excellent performance in the classroom and in working with students.
- iv. Evidence of excellence in scholarly achievement and professional activity, as well as promise of continued scholarly development.

- v. Evidence of substantive participation in departmental and college or school curricular and governance activities.
- vi. Evidence of good professional standing, for example, by maintaining any required professional license.
- vii. Success in satisfying the elements of faculty quality and academic and ethical responsibilities described above.

**b. Associate Professor to Professor**

Promotion to Professor is based on a record of excellent accomplishment and high competence demonstrating career-long integration with post-tenure evidence that the candidate has entered a mature stage of their professional development. The concepts of excellent accomplishment and high competence are necessarily abstract because they must be applied to faculty working across a wide array of disciplines and sub-disciplines. However, these concepts provide an effective and flexible method for maintaining high standards over time and across many different circumstances and relevant communities impacted.

This stage is demonstrated by extraordinary engagement and leadership in at least one area of faculty work described below, as articulated by the faculty member's adopted HFDP. Although candidates are not expected to have equal levels of commitment or equal responsibilities across all areas of faculty work, demonstration of articulated and integrated professional expertise and identity is expected. The evaluation of excellent accomplishment and high competence is based on a holistic evaluation of the evidence of the quantity, quality and trajectory of work presented in faculty members' dossier in light of the University's mission.

In addition to consistent positive Annual Performance Reviews, as detailed in the criteria of individual units, departments, and colleges, eligibility requirements for promotion to Professor include:

A minimum of four years, normally at Seattle University, of experience as an associate professor prior to the time of application for promotion; and

Evidence of ongoing effectiveness in supporting the SU student experience as exemplified through teaching, advising, student mentoring or administrative support of student success as evaluated holistically.

- ~~i.— Sustained superior performance in the classroom and in working with students; Attainment of national stature in one's discipline as evidenced by a sustained record of significant scholarly and professional activity, such as paper presentations; participation in professional colloquia and seminars; publication of scholarly essays, journal articles, textbooks, monographs; or artistic/musical accomplishment;~~
- ~~ii.— Evidence of significant service to the University through distinguished academic leadership at the department or school or college level and participation in special academic programs, curricular and governance or professional service activities.~~

Recommendations for promotion to Professor will be based on evidence of excellent accomplishment and high competence in one or more areas of faculty work. Areas of faculty work to which a faculty member may apply their expertise are:

- i. Curriculum/program development;
- ii. Contributions to university leadership;
- iii. Research/scholarly/creative practice;
- iv. Applied and public scholarship;
- v. Community-engaged scholarship and research, teaching and learning, or other service.

The following guidelines provide direction to faculty candidates preparing materials for evaluation for promotion to Professor and to the personnel involved in the evaluation process. These include:

- i. A wide and inclusive range of activities that support a comprehensive, mission-focused university will be recognized;
- ii. Faculty petitioning for promotion to Professor will demonstrate a record of achievement that indicates intentional development in one or more of the areas of faculty work as articulated in their adopted HFDP;
- iii. The dossier will include an integrated statement that communicates and provides evidence of the outcomes of their HFDP;
- iv. Evaluators will assess candidates for promotion in terms of the faculty's HFDP and demonstrated contributions and impact. Consideration will focus on the area(s) of faculty work upon which the faculty member has focused in their HFDP and accompanying record;
- v. The list of External Reviewers proposed by faculty must be selected based on their areas of expertise and ability to evaluate the quality of work identified by the faculty in their HFDP. Reviewers of a faculty member's dossier must be experts in their given areas, but need not be associated with an institution of higher education.

Untenured tenure-track faculty members holding the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor generally are not considered for promotion to Associate or full Professor prior to the normal tenure review. The standard timelines for consideration for promotion and/or tenure review should be adhered to under normal circumstances. Exceptions may be considered in cases of extraordinary performance or when other criteria and timelines for promotion consideration are established in the initial letter of appointment. In the School of Law, promotion to Associate Professor may occur prior to the review for tenure. In addition, an Associate Professor of Law may apply for promotion to Professor after a minimum of three years of successful teaching as an Associate Professor, normally at Seattle University, or in the second year after tenure has been granted, whichever comes first, unless a different timetable is set forth in the individual's initial tenure-track contract of employment.

## **B. Promotion and Tenure Procedures**

The responsibility for consideration for promotion and/or tenure and for preparing the review files rests with the faculty member. The responsibility for evaluating a faculty member's teaching, mentorship of students, research/scholarly achievements, service and professional activity falls

initially to his or her department and/or college or school colleagues, with oversight provided by the faculty member's Dean. In addition, the college or school must engage the services of qualified experts from outside the university to conduct an external review of the candidate's accomplishments within the context of the larger discipline. [Comment: Please see points iv and v in the section immediately preceding this one. These new points will necessitate change in the above-highlighted sentence.]

All files for formal review shall conform to the "Guidelines for File Preparation and Presentation" promulgated by the Provost and available at: <https://www.seattleu.edu/academicaffairs/policies/>. It is expected that individuals who play a major role in the review and approval of a faculty member's application are thoroughly familiar with the guidelines and procedures established in the evaluation of the candidate. All participants in the review process shall maintain responsible professional confidentiality. Faculty members shall not vote at more than one level of review. Faculty members who voted in the department personnel committee review on a tenure and/or promotion candidate shall not vote in the school personnel or the University Rank and Tenure committee review of that candidate. This same rule applies to Department Chairs, who must write an independent recommendation of the candidate's petition as part of his or her duties as Chair. Because this recommendation constitutes a vote within the overall process, a Department Chair cannot vote beyond the department level on candidates housed in his or her department. Faculty members who have voted in the school personnel committee review on a tenure candidate shall not vote in the University Rank and Tenure committee review on that candidate. All stages of the promotion and review process must conform to the approved departmental, college or school criteria and guidelines. In colleges or schools with departments, the departmental personnel review committee, or its equivalent, along with the department chair shall evaluate the performance of the candidate and make recommendations to the school or the college personnel review committee, or its equivalent.

The minimum size of departmental personnel review committees shall be three tenured faculty members. If the department does not have three qualified tenured members who can form the personnel review committee, the personnel review committee of the relevant school or college, in consultation with the Dean of the relevant school or college, shall appoint sufficient additional tenured faculty members of the school or college to fulfill the minimum size of three persons.

The school or college personnel review committee will review the recommendations of the departmental personnel review committee, as well as other information it deems appropriate, and shall make recommendations to the Dean or academic supervisor or Director. In schools or colleges without Departmental Personnel Review Committees, the school or college Personnel Review Committee shall make the initial evaluation and recommendation to the Dean. At the request of either the committee or the candidate, the candidate shall meet with the school or college Personnel Review Committee to make a verbal presentation.

Deans who will make separate and independent evaluations of the faculty member may provide factual information to the school or college committee, if such is solicited by the review committee. They need not, however, communicate to the committee their judgments concerning the faculty member's performance and qualifications for reappointment.

When the Dean is satisfied that the evaluation has been thoroughly conducted and the recommendation is soundly based, he or she will deliver to the candidate a summary of the report

submitted by the school or college Personnel Review Committee(s), without attribution or vote count, in a timely manner. The candidate shall have at least five working days to submit a written statement in response to the summarized report and the recommendation. Then the Dean shall forward to the Provost the candidate's file; the department, school, or college Personnel Review Committee evaluation(s); any written response from the candidate to the evaluation; and his or her own recommendation and observations. In forming his or her recommendation, the Dean shall give due weight and appropriate consideration to the views of the Personnel Review Committee.

If the Dean is not satisfied with the evaluation and the recommendation, he or she will return it with comments to the Personnel Review Committee(s) from which it originated. If the Personnel Review Committee(s) does not accept the Dean's suggestions, the Dean then will deliver to the candidate a summary of the report submitted by the Personnel Review Committee(s), without attribution or vote count, in a timely manner. The candidate shall have at least five working days to submit a written statement in response to the summarized report and the recommendation. Then the Dean shall forward to the Provost the candidate's file; the department, school, or college Personnel Review Committee evaluation(s); any written response from the candidate to the evaluation; and his or her own recommendation and observations. In forming his or her recommendation, the Dean shall give due weight and appropriate consideration to the views of the Personnel Review Committee.

In the School of Law, candidates for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor receive the verbatim report prepared by the Personnel Review Committee.

Upon completion of the process at the school or college level, the Dean will provide a written summary of his or her own recommendation and the reasons for that recommendation to the candidate. The faculty member may choose to submit additional information to the Provost and the University Rank and Tenure Committee. Both the Provost and the University Rank and Tenure Committee will consider that information before making a final recommendation.

The Provost shall present the recommendation received from the college or school personnel review committee and the Dean to the University Rank and Tenure Committee for review and recommendation. He or she then shall forward the recommendation of the University Rank and Tenure Committee, along with his or her own recommendation, to the President. An overt action by the President is required for both promotion and tenure. The Office of the Provost informs the faculty member of the final decision in both promotion and tenure applications.

Should allegations of serious misconduct against a faculty member arise during the tenure review process or after review, but before the date tenure is granted, the Dean has the discretion to either:

- (1) Give the faculty member a full, written description of the alleged facts and circumstances and invite his or her response. The faculty member's response will be included, with the allegations, in the dossier.
- or (2) Suspend the tenure evaluation process and refer the misconduct allegations to the appropriate internal bodies for resolution. Upon resolution, the tenure process will resume.

Allegations of serious misconduct include, but are not limited to, unethical conduct, violations of University policies concerning discrimination against a member of a protected class, grave personal misconduct that bears on one's fitness as a faculty member, criminal acts and plagiarism.

### **C. Timing of Promotion and Tenure**

The School of Law evaluates tenure-track candidates for promotion to Associate Professor (without tenure) in the fourth year. In all other colleges and schools, formal review of progress toward promotion and tenure at the rank of Assistant Professor shall occur in the third and sixth-year review. Any variation from this timeline for formal review shall have been specified in the faculty member's initial employment contract.

#### **a. Tenure-Track Appointments**

Tenure-track appointments provide the appointee probationary status as a ranked faculty member and a contract for a stated period, usually one academic year, subject to renewal. The probationary appointment provides the non-tenured faculty member time to develop and demonstrate to the satisfaction of the faculty member's peers and the appropriate academic administrators the qualifications requisite for tenure. The probationary period for a faculty member who has served Seattle University shall not exceed seven years. If granted, tenure and, where relevant, promotion take effect no later than the beginning of the seventh year. The denial of tenure will result in a terminal year contract for the academic year following tenure review.

For those individuals initially appointed at Seattle University to the rank of Associate Professor or Professor without tenure, the tenure decision is normally made during the third consecutive year of service. Final departmental review and recommendations for such candidates are completed during the third year of consecutive service (subject to exceptions discussed below). If tenure is granted, the faculty member's contract for the fourth year constitutes the first tenure contract. If tenure is not granted, notice is given prior to the conclusion of the third year that the fourth year constitutes a final appointment.

Upon the conclusion of a terminal appointment after the denial of tenure, the faculty member cannot be reappointed to a non-tenure track faculty position (full or part-time appointment) for at least a period of five years.

Any variation from these timelines for formal review must be specified in the faculty member's initial employment contract or by later written agreement by the faculty member and the Provost. Prescribed probationary time periods are not to be regarded as guaranteeing the issuance of contracts prior to tenure. Seattle University is not bound to afford tenure-track faculty members the maximum trial period to demonstrate qualifications for tenure. As a consequence, Seattle University may elect not to renew a contract in any year if the available evidence indicates that an ultimate grant of tenure, or continuing service of, that faculty member would not serve the best interests of Seattle University. Procedures for non-renewal (also referred to as "non-reappointment") are outlined in Section VIII.B below.

#### **b. Provision for the Calculation of the Probationary Period for Tenure-track Faculty Members**

Upon the recommendation of the Dean, the probationary period may be shortened from the normal length by the Provost, with the agreement of the faculty member, provided this

arrangement is specified in writing at the time of the initial appointment. In exceptional cases, the President may grant tenure at any time prior to the completion of the probationary period.

#### *Reduction*

The University and an individual appointed to a tenure-track position may agree at the time of appointment that the individual will receive advanced standing within the probationary period up to three years if appointed as Assistant Professor. If the faculty member receives credit for prior service, the individual's research and publications from the credited period of service will receive weight equivalent to research and publications conducted while on the Seattle University faculty.

#### *Extension*

A tenure-track faculty member may experience prolonged, external circumstances or documented disability that significantly impedes his or her progress toward tenure. In such cases, the individual may request in writing (1) a leave of absence; (2) temporary reassignment from a full-time position to a part-time one; or, (3) in the case of a documented disability, consideration of other reasonable accommodations. With advice from the Department Chair, the Dean may, with the approval of the Provost, grant, modify, or reject the request. Because only years of full-time service are included in computing eligibility for tenure, a tenure-track faculty member on either a leave of absence or a part-time appointment does not accrue time toward tenure.

In situations of prolonged, external circumstances that significantly impede progress toward tenure, a tenure-track faculty member may request in writing that a period equivalent to the duration of the external circumstances, but in no case more than two years, will not be included in computing eligibility for tenure. With advice from the department chair and the Dean, the Provost may grant, modify, or reject the request.

Except in cases of approved leaves of absence, injury, accidents, serious illness, or other unforeseeable circumstances, all requests to extend the probationary period must be made in advance and will not be granted retroactively. A tenure-track faculty member may not normally extend the probationary period for more than a total of two years of full-time service.

## **VII. Confidentiality and Disclosure in Faculty Evaluations**

The University believes that confidentiality of communications and materials is important to full and fair consideration for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Confidentiality promotes candor and honesty among the participants conducting reviews. Therefore, all statements of fact and all statements of judgment (whether oral or written) made during (or for use in) any formal consideration for reappointment, tenure, or promotion, (including without limitation, recommendations and opinions made by persons outside of the University) are and shall remain confidential. In addition, the percentage of committee members voting yes or no, at any level of the review process, shall remain confidential. At the same time, while the confidentiality of individual committee members is to be protected, the University believes that candidates deserve to be informed of the final decisions of the various committees, and of the reasons for a negative decision as outlined in Section VIB on "Promotion and Tenure Procedures." The University balances the important values of confidentiality

and disclosure in faculty evaluations.

Those conducting evaluations bear a professional obligation not to disseminate sensitive information beyond those with an official need to know.

The University seeks to protect the confidentiality of evaluation information to the extent legally practicable.