

Guidelines on Faculty Appointment, Reappointment, & Promotion Cases

Office of the Provost

24 January 2017

Contents

1	General Principles	3
2	Components of a Case	4
2.1	Documentation of deliberations	4
2.2	Items to be obtained from the candidate	5
2.3	Letters from External referees	5
2.4	Letters of support from internal referees	6
3	All New Cases at All Ranks	7
4	For new appointments without tenure	7
4.1	Letters from the Chair or Dean	7
4.2	Letters from outside referees	8
4.3	Evidence of Teaching effectiveness	8
4.4	Draft offer letter	8
4.5	Documentation of the Search	8

5	For re-appointment without tenure	8
5.1	Letters from the Chair or Dean	8
5.2	Letters from Outside Referees	9
5.3	Evidence of Teaching effectiveness	9
5.4	Draft “letter to the candidate”	9
6	For re-appointment and tenure	10
6.1	Letters from the Chair or Dean	10
6.2	Evidence of Teaching effectiveness	10
7	For Professor promotions	11
7.1	Letters from the Chair or Dean	11
7.2	Letters from outside referees at the rank of Professor	11
7.3	Evidence of teaching and mentoring of both students and junior faculty . . .	11
8	Early promotion to tenure or to full Professor	11
9	Periods of reduced effort	12
10	Timing of the Case	12
11	Appointment Offers to Faculty Members at Other Institutions	12
12	Revision History	13

Guidelines on Faculty Appointment, Reappointment, & Promotion Cases

The University's continued excellence depends on the quality of our faculty and that, in turn, depends on the thoroughness of searches and the rigor of processes of evaluation undertaken by departments and schools. We in the Provost's Office are continually considering the criteria and processes for faculty appointments and promotions in light of the many and various cases we review each year. These guidelines apply to appointments to the University Faculties, that is, individuals who are or will be appointed under University Statute 11.1, which includes tenure-track faculty members.

Although we have no wish to establish an inflexible checklist of required items for every case, thorough documentation is essential. The better a case is made, the better it will do its job and the more expeditiously we can deal with it. When cases are initiated in departments and/or sections, we encourage you to share these guidelines with department chairs and section chiefs.

When a case arrives in the Provost's Office, we read it with in the light of the general principles articulated below, drawn from the Shils Report, we read it with care and evaluate the case's argument and evidence in support of the action it recommends.

1 General Principles

Every appointment, reappointment, and promotion must be solidly grounded in actual accomplishment which, when coupled with evidence of future promise, gives rise to a strong likelihood that the candidate will bring continued and increasing distinction to the University over the entire course of the candidate's academic career here.

That means that we hire as assistant professors only those for whom achieving tenure is judged to be eminently achievable. We re-appoint assistant professors to a second term only when there is a clearly discernible path linking what they have already accomplished to a body of work that by the end of the term will be recognized as fundamental and significant scholarship holding promise for sustained contributions of increasing distinction over at least the next ten years. We promote to Associate professor with indefinite tenure only for such a body of work, coupled with evidence that scholarly contributions will continue, that there is an identifiable path leading to promotion to full Professor, and that promotion within a reasonable period of time is likely.

2 Components of a Case

2.1 Documentation of deliberations

Reports. Every Faculty case should include a report of the internal ad-hoc or search committee on the candidate, if there is such a report.

Chair's and Dean's letters. Every Faculty case should include a memorandum from the department Chair or from the Dean of the School (reporting, among other things, on the faculty discussion and vote on the case)¹. The letter should include a *research précis* written for the non-specialist that explains the major research contributions and their importance to the field. If the case is from a Division, letters are also required from the Dean of the Division, Dean of the College, and Master of the relevant Collegiate Division. These letters need not repeat information found elsewhere in the file. In particular, we ask that they not quote extensively from the letters of referees, all of which we will read. It is the Chair's or Dean's and Master's own independent and candid judgment of the strengths and weaknesses of the case that is valuable to the Provost's Office. These letters should be written while keeping in mind the criteria in the Shils Report. Appointments without tenure are offered to candidates who show promise for achieving tenure; tenure is awarded to candidates whose accomplishments demonstrate that the likelihood is high that even greater accomplishments will follow and warrant promotion to full professor in the foreseeable future. Every member of the Faculty of the University should have achieved or be on a path to achieve distinction in a field. A well-made case is one that presents evidence and arguments that the candidate is on that path. However, the nature and quantity of evidence available will change over time, as a career develops, and so these letters must be adapted to the career-stage of the candidate.

"Fit" and contributions to the University. The letters also should speak to the candidate's "fit," broadly understood, and not simply in terms of filling gaps in the unit. Questions to be addressed (with specific examples) regarding candidates include:

For current faculty—

- How have they enhanced the intellectual life of the University? (This topic has in the past been comprised within "service.")
- In what ways does their presence "multiply" the contributions of others?
- Do they foster (or facilitate) otherwise unlikely collaborations?
- Have they instigated new things?

¹We require that the vote be reported numerically as for, opposed, abstaining, and total number of members of the unit's faculty who are eligible to vote. That includes members who are on leave, and those not present.

- Why is the broader University enhanced by their presence?

For new hires—

- What are the prospects for the above?
- Is there evidence to suggest it is likely, e.g., already seeing this at on-campus interviews?

2.2 Items to be obtained from the candidate

- *Current curriculum vitae.* In order to document “fit” as defined above, candidates for reappointment or promotion should be urged to include a version of their CV that documents service to the University’s intellectual community.
- *Research and teaching statements.* (These are particularly useful for junior appointments.)
- Where the research is collaborative and the publications co-authored, an explanation of the respective roles of the various participants and of the *specific contributions of the candidate* is important.
- The *teaching statement* should include a summary of teaching activities and an explication of teaching philosophy and goals.
- A *selection of writings* (or other appropriate work). In addition to published work, this might include material in press, under review, or in preparation, if particularly relevant to the analysis of the case.

2.3 Letters from External referees

Letters are expected for new appointments without tenure, all promotions, and lateral appointment. Letters from external referees are not required by the Provost for the reappointment of an assistant professor to a second term. If you choose to solicit them, we advise that you keep their number to a minimum, since the pool of qualified referees is limited. Moreover, a letter in a tenure case that quotes extensively from the referee’s earlier letter in a re-appointment case can seem to present a judgment formed at an earlier stage in the candidate’s career.

When there is a letter case submitted, we require:

1. A list of all external scholars invited to submit evaluations of the candidate.

- (a) This list should note who selected the external referees, why the particular referees were chosen and, if a referee declines, the reasons given for such refusal.
 - (b) In general, we recommend that mentors of the candidate not be solicited for recommendations beyond that of initial appointment. If such letters are included, the list should identify the candidate's dissertation mentor and/or postdoctoral supervisor and explain why they were solicited.
 - (c) Co-authors may be solicited, particularly when they can help to clarify the particular contributions of a candidate to collaborative research.
 - (d) If the candidate requested named referees or requested that named referees not be solicited, include a copy of the correspondence or contemporary notes of the discussion, along with a description of the unit's policies for dealing with such requests.
2. A sample copy of the letter sent to external referees soliciting an evaluation of the candidate.
- (a) The letter of solicitation should be clear about the proposed rank.
 - (b) There is no required language for inclusion in letters requesting references, but we do expect that specific questions be asked of referees. Some examples:
 - What is the candidate's standing in the field(s) in which s/he works?
 - What particular contributions has the candidate made to the field(s) in which s/he works?
 - What are the most important publications in the candidate's bibliography, and which ones constitute essential reading for others who work in the field?
 - Who, in the opinion of the referee, are the scholars doing the most important work in the field, and how, specifically, does the candidate compare with them?
 - In the cases of recent PhD's, where letters are likely to come from dissertation supervisors or postdoctoral mentors, what is the candidate's potential, and how does s/he compare with other students/postdocs the referee has advised?
3. An indication of what materials were provided to referees.

2.4 Letters of support from internal referees

Letters from colleagues at the University are valuable when they are analytical, and provide evidence for the ways in which the candidate has made palpable contributions to the work of others. For new appointments, we would like to know about the prospects for such contributions.

3 All New Cases at All Ranks

Effective immediately all proposals for new Faculty appointments must contain (a) a draft proposed offer letter to the candidate and (b) information about the full set of resources that the proposed appointment will entail, if not already included in the offer letter. This includes all resources, including (but not limited to) salary and benefits, housing commitments, administrative or other allowances, teaching reductions, guaranteed paid leaves, guaranteed summer salary, build-out, staff and students, research funds, travel funds, and start-up expenses.

In addition, the proposal should indicate the projected dollar amount of these resources that would likely be spent in each of the next two academic years, how these expenses will fit into your approved budget, and the extent to which any non-renewable (i.e., gift) funds will be used.

It is important to note the offers of employment can only be made after review and approval by the Provost. No offers should be tendered to prospective faculty before the Provost's approval is received. Candidates who will be proposed for appointment should be informed that an offer can only be tendered after it has first been approved by the Provost, and they should not be given to believe that this is a mere formality. As proposals for new appointments are reviewed going forward, the Provost shall do so with regard not only to the academic merit of the proposal, but also to the budget implications.

See also section 4.5 below.

4 For new appointments without tenure

4.1 Letters from the Chair or Dean

We would like to know how you evaluate the prospects for the candidate in view of the candidate's experience to date, and what reasonably foreseeable issues could arise that could diminish expected progress toward tenure during the appointment term. How does the department/School propose to assist the candidate to recognize these issues early in the term and deal with them effectively? Are there issues specific to the candidate that should be taken into account in effecting the department's mentoring program?

These questions and their answers are particularly important for initial appointments as *second-term* Assistant Professor, as the remaining tenure clock is much compressed, aspects of the candidate's trajectory may have been fashioned for a tenure system with different expectations from ours, and making the transition from one institution to another introduces additional distraction.

4.2 Letters from outside referees

At the earliest stages of a career, although outside letters are of limited value, we expect them in all cases. Three to four letters will usually suffice.

4.3 Evidence of Teaching effectiveness

Evidence of effective teaching cannot reasonably be expected in all cases for early-career appointments. Chairs/Deans should request evaluations from the candidate's institution, if at all possible. When there is evidence, it should be included and analyzed.

If students have participated in the selection of a new appointment, departments may wish to invite them to contribute letters stating their impressions.

When the candidate will be coming to us from a non-US system, the "Letter to the Provost" and Draft offer letter should set out what the department or school will do before the new assistant professor begins to teach, so that he or she can get off to a good start.

4.4 Draft offer letter

For assistant professors, the draft offer letter must set forth the career development plan in the unit. Career development resources must be committed as part of every offer to an assistant professor.

4.5 Documentation of the Search

For all new appointments, we require documentation of the search process. Refer to "Recruiting Academics to the University."

5 For re-appointment without tenure

5.1 Letters from the Chair or Dean

How has the candidate moved beyond the original dissertation research? What significant new scholarly contributions has the candidate made since the last appointment review? What is in the pipeline? Critically, since promotion will depend heavily on the extent to which the

candidate's scholarship is changing their field in the judgment of experts, will enough work have been published for experts to gauge the candidate's impact on the field?

Each unit also should describe the activities undertaken by its senior faculty to carry out the unit's commitment to advise the candidate about career development. We have provided information describing a number of mentoring best practices; no unit is required to adopt a particular plan, but every unit is expected to have a plan that suits its needs and culture.

- When a reappointment case is not strong we will continue to ask for an intervention plan.
- This plan should now include reference to modifying or intensifying the existing career development resources when it is reasonable to believe that there may be a path to tenure for the candidate.

5.2 Letters from Outside Referees

Refer to section 2.3 above.

5.3 Evidence of Teaching effectiveness

We wish to understand both the extent and the quality of the candidate's teaching. Useful information includes:

- A complete list of the courses taught in the previous three years. For clinical faculty the list would instead focus on major clinical training responsibilities.
- Internal letters from graduate (or sometimes undergraduate) students, discussing the candidate as a teacher/mentor. If students have participated in the selection of a new appointment, departments may wish to invite them to contribute letters stating their impressions.
- Copies, or complete summaries, of all the candidate's undergraduate and graduate teaching evaluations in the last three years, accompanied by an explanation for those courses for which we have no such evaluations. We recognize that types of evidence about teaching varies across the University.

5.4 Draft "letter to the candidate"

We have provided templates a letter that gives the candidate realistic and unambiguous feedback about where the candidate is on the path to tenure, including what has been

accomplished and what a successful case will have to look like.

We require that this letter describe the past and future activities undertaken by the unit's senior faculty to carry out the unit's commitment to advise the candidate about career development. We have provided information describing a number of mentoring best practices; no unit is required to adopt a particular plan, but every unit is expected to have a plan that suits its needs and culture. When a reappointment case is not strong we will continue to ask for an intervention plan. This plan should now include reference to modifying or intensifying the existing career development resources and explain why it is reasonable to believe that there may be a path to tenure for the candidate.

6 For re-appointment and tenure

6.1 Letters from the Chair or Dean

What is the trajectory of the candidate's research program, what is the likelihood of promotion to Professor within 5-10 years, and on what will the promotion likely be based? In accord with the criteria of the Shils Report, the letter should describe and evaluate the candidate's research, teaching, and contributions to the intellectual community both within the University and at large. We recognize that a faculty committee may have written an extensive report to the tenured member of the department or school; however, the dean's analysis is critical. In particular, if the department does not provide it, the Provost must rely on the dean to provide an analysis that does not presuppose a specialist's knowledge of the field and an explanation of why the senior faculty deem the candidate's research to be fundamental and significant.

6.2 Evidence of Teaching effectiveness

We wish to understand both the extent and the quality of the candidate's teaching. In addition to the items listed in section 5.3 above, we wish to have a list of all undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral trainees. Please assure that the candidate has provided this information on the CV submitted with the dossier.

7 For Professor promotions

7.1 Letters from the Chair or Dean

As in all cases, we wish to see documentation of the unit's deliberation. We expect deliberations at a minimum to address the following questions:

- What has happened since promotion to tenured Associate Professor that justifies the promotion?
- What are the indicators that the candidate has achieved distinction in the field?
- What is the evidence that points to continued sustained impact in the field going forward?

These questions should be addressed for lateral appointments as well. They are particularly important to discuss when the appointee is at the rank of Associate Professor at his or her current institution.

7.2 Letters from outside referees at the rank of Professor

Letters should be solicited from those who are at peer institutions and are recognized as being among the most distinguished people in the field.

7.3 Evidence of teaching and mentoring of both students and junior faculty

We wish to know about the candidate's contributions both to training students and postdocs, and to mentoring junior faculty.

8 Early promotion to tenure or to full Professor

We recognize that the pressure to promote early can be strong, owing to circumstances such as unusually prestigious recognition that the candidate may have received, outside offers, etc. Although we certainly stand willing to consider exceptional cases, our strong presumption is generally against early action, without unambiguous evidence and justification. All such recommendations should be preceded by consultation with the Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs.

9 Periods of reduced effort

If an untenured candidate for reappointment or promotion has had a “stop-the-clock,” please discuss whether and how you have taken that into account.

10 Timing of the Case

Cases are reviewed carefully in the Provost’s Office and this vetting takes time. Normally, a review can be completed within about two weeks². If faster action is necessary, please let Steve Gabel (2-0790) know *well in advance*; please also flag the case as requiring immediate review.

11 Appointment Offers to Faculty Members at Other Institutions

The University observes the AAUP policy, which stipulates that offers for fall appointments to individuals currently on the faculty at other institutions must be made by 1 May so that they may resign from their present institutions by 15 May. To meet this deadline, proposals for such appointments should be received in the Provost’s Office by 7 April of each year.

²The Provost’s Office does not ordinarily begin the review of the case until all required materials have been received. For appointments in the Divisions, those materials typically includes the review and recommendation of the Dean of the College and the corresponding Collegiate Master. During some times of year, especially between November 1 and December 15, over Winter break, and during the Summer Quarter, case loads and vacations may cause the review time to extend beyond two weeks.

12 Revision History

- *8 August 2016.*
Initial version.
- *13 October 2016.*
Minor corrections and clarifications.
- *9 November 2016.*
Correct typographical errors.
- *24 January 2017.*
The nontechnical research précis should be part of the Department and/or Dean's letter. The earlier version had this as material to be obtained from the candidate.