

Promotion and Tenure – Departmental Companion Guide

Suggestions for Departmental Promotion & Tenure Committees, Department Chairs, and Administrators

Important Note to all faculty members: Read this section and learn specifically how this works in YOUR department!

The Office of Faculty Affairs (OFA) conducted a survey in 2009 of College of Medicine (COM) departments in order to suggest current “best practices” for departmental personnel who assist and support faculty members in their requests for promotion and tenure. Our goal in sharing this summary of the survey results is two-fold: to help all faculty members understand and prepare well when requesting promotion and tenure – including how to navigate the process within their departments and in the College of Medicine, and to offer suggestions to departments.

Depending on the size of the department, the main contacts for faculty members with regard to promotion and tenure information are department chairs, departmental administrators, and some executive assistants.

Each department is required to have a departmentally based promotion and tenure (P&T) committee. This is typically a standing committee in larger departments wherein many faculty members request promotion and/or tenure each year. In smaller departments the P & T committees are often *ad hoc*, called together by the respective department chair when a faculty member is preparing to request promotion and/or tenure. The composition or membership of the departmental P&T committee, whether standing or *ad hoc*, reflects the distribution of the academic pathways of the department’s faculty. The processes by which the departmental P&T committee operates and the timeline within which the committee does its work need to be made clear to all departmental faculty members.

General Recommendations/Best Practices: 1. Advice and Mentoring about Academic Success

- **Start early in your career within the College to think about promotion requirements.**

Department’s role: Newly appointed faculty members meet with their chair and/or the division chief shortly after joining the faculty to discuss career goals and expectations and establish a schedule to review or examine career progress.

- **Obtain continued guidance and help to track your progress towards achieving the criteria for promotion and/or tenure.**

Department’s role: Many large departments now assign each new faculty member a mentor or a mentoring committee for career guidance and to track the individual’s progress. In many smaller departments, the chair remains a new faculty member’s primary mentor. Whether large or small, every department should provide mentoring options for new faculty members. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these mentoring opportunities and to ensure that the process is continuous, scheduling at least two mentoring meetings annually. [Staff in the Faculty Center will be happy to guide department chairs and administrators toward individuals who can describe the College’s most successful mentoring models.]

- **Learn the specific criteria for promotion on your academic pathway**

Department's role: Departmental leaders strongly encourage their faculty members to attend the P&T workshop series offered each spring by the Faculty Center. Within these workshops, current members of the College of Medicine P&T Committee provide useful information and answer questions.

- **Obtain the objective opinions of experts in your field as to whether you have met the criteria for promotion on your academic pathway.**

Department's role: The two best sources of this important evaluative information are 1) experts in the candidate's field who actually come to know the candidate's work and scholarly contributions, and 2) members of the departmental P&T committee who review the candidate's work and scholarly contributions. Access to the former is through professional introductions of junior faculty members to senior faculty members – locally, nationally, and internationally. Such introductions can lead to collaborative work, as well as networking and exchange within professional societies and conferences. These experts are often the people to whom individual candidates will eventually turn for letters of recommendation to support their request(s) for promotion and/or tenure.

- **Link guidance and mentoring about academic success to evaluation of academic success.**

Departmental role: Survey results and faculty P&T “success rates” indicate that the ideal model within the College is one wherein the departmental P&T committee serves both a mentoring/faculty development function and an assessment function (e.g., evaluating a faculty member's academic achievements, giving guidance about “gaps” in academic accomplishment and how those gaps might be filled, and rendering an opinion as to whether the individual has met the criteria for promotion and/or tenure). The specifics of how this work is accomplished by committee members can be tailored to each department's needs and faculty resources.

- **Obtain expert help preparing your promotion and tenure packet**

Departmental role: Larger departments have dedicated staff members who have experience in helping individual candidates compile their P&T packets. In addition to consulting these individuals, make an appointment in the Faculty Center to review their library of particularly well-constructed packets. Ensure that an experienced senior faculty member is available to review your packet and give you constructive criticism on its presentation before you submit the packet for review by the departmental P&T committee.

General Recommendations/Best Practices: 2. Departmental P&T Committee Processes

Membership of the Departmental P&T Committee: The department chair appoints the departmental P&T committee. Typically, members are appointed from among the department's Professors. The department chair may be a member of the committee. In some departments, experienced Associate Professors may also be asked to serve on the committee. Departmental size and the distribution of the department's faculty members across the College's academic pathways determines the composition of the

committee. It is important to have at least one representative on the departmental P&T committee for each academic pathway on which departmental faculty members are appointed (e.g., If a clinical department has a few basic scientists among its faculty, it is important to have a Professor on the basic scientist pathway on the department P&T committee.)

Work of the Departmental P&T Committee: As noted above, in many departments the departmental P&T committee serves both an advising/faculty development role and an evaluative role. Comments here will focus on the evaluative role.

- Annual reviews allow opportunities for each faculty member and division director or department chair to assess the individual's contributions. These take into account productivity in all of the areas addressed in the P&T Guidelines (e.g., Teaching/Mentoring; Research/Scholarly Work; Clinical Service (when applicable), Leadership/Administrative Service, and Professional Recognition.)
- Departmental P&T Committees are strongly encouraged to review the updated Curriculum Vitae of tenure-track faculty members during their 4th year in rank as Assistant Professors. This is a good time to provide constructive feedback, focusing on what further academic achievements need to be accomplished in order that the individual may be successful when requesting promotion and tenure after completion of their 5th year in rank (e.g., during the 6th year in rank) as Assistant Professor.
- Annually in February, the Faculty Center provides department chairs and departmental administrators with a roster of the department's tenure track faculty members who have not yet been awarded tenure and who will be entering their 6th year and their 7th years in rank, effective the following July 1. Every tenure track faculty member who has not yet been awarded tenure MUST request tenure from the College P&T Committee during the individual's 6th year, in accordance with UA Board Policy 405.1 .
- Departmental P&T Committees determine the processes by which individual faculty members' P&T packets will be reviewed and by which the Committee will provide feedback to candidates about potential additions/improvements/clarifications that should be made to the materials presented with the packets.
- Departmental Professors who are former members of the College P&T Committee are particularly valuable members of departmental P&T committees and are excellent "coaches" for faculty members regarding the construction of concise P&T packets.
- Departmental P&T Committees ultimately vote on whether an individual candidate has met the criteria for promotion and/or tenure. The result of the vote is transmitted to the department chair who must include this information in the "chair's letter" that will become a part of each candidate's P&T packet. It is unusual but permissible under UA and COM policy for an individual faculty member to request promotion and/or tenure without the support of his/her department's P&T committee and without the support of his/her department chair. In these rare circumstances, the individual must explicitly document in his/her P&T packet that the request(s) is being made without departmental approval.

Timeline of the Departmental P&T Committee's work

- Ideally, the departmental P&T committee is aware of every faculty member in the department, their respective academic pathway, and their time in rank. The Faculty Center Staff is available to assist departmental administrators with the preparation of departmental faculty rosters containing this information.
- Standing departmental P&T committees typically follow an annual work schedule. *Ad hoc* departmental P&T committees develop an appropriate work schedule, depending on the progress of junior faculty members and their time-line for requesting promotion and/or tenure. The typical components of the work schedule include:
 - Review of the faculty roster: Who should be requesting promotion and/or tenure? In some departments, administrative staff assist the committee in this review.
 - Set and announce the deadline for CV reviews of tenure track faculty members in their 4th year in rank as Assistant Professors. Some departments conduct 4th year reviews of all junior faculty members, regardless of academic pathway.
 - Set and announce the deadline for P&T packet submission to the departmental committee from all candidates who will be requesting promotion and/or tenure in the fall. The “due-date” varies across the College, with some departments requiring packet submission in the late spring while others require submission by late summer. Ideally, one or two members of the departmental P&T committee review a candidate’s P&T packet and provide feedback about any improvements that need to be made before the entire departmental committee reviews the packet. A candidate typically has 2 – 3 weeks to make the edits prior to the final review by the departmental committee.
 - Departmental P&T Committee “review meeting” – during which the committee votes on whether to approve each candidate’s requests for promotion and/or tenure.

General Recommendations/Best Practices: 3. Department Chair’s Letters in support of a faculty member’s request for promotion and/or tenure

The Chair’s letter is given a great deal of consideration by the College P&T Committee. It is the document wherein the Chair expresses his/her own opinion as to how well the candidate has fulfilled the criteria for promotion and/or tenure, and his/her opinion as to the value of the candidate’s contributions to the department, the College, and the candidate’s field of expertise. The Chair’s letter also documents the departmental P&T committee’s vote regarding the candidate’s readiness for promotion and/or tenure. It is helpful if the Chair’s comments are arranged categorically, in parallel with the criteria for promotion, i.e.,

- Teaching/Mentoring contributions
- Research/Scholarly Work
- Clinical Service (for clinical faculty)

- Leadership/Administrative Service
- Professional Recognition

The first paragraph of the Chair's letter should explicitly state the candidate's requests, and these should match the requests noted on the cover page of the candidate's P&T packet (e.g., promotion only; promotion and tenure; tenure only, promotion in a secondary appointment as well as in the primary appointment.)

Other topics about which the Chair may need to comment:

- If the candidate's "**Time and Effort Distribution**" as stated on the cover page of the individual's P&T packet differs significantly from the time and effort distribution recommended for the individual's academic pathway within the College P&T Guidelines, then the chair should explain and justify the difference. The candidate should also explain and justify the difference within the body of the packet.
- If the **candidate's work is atypical within the individual's academic pathway**, then the chair should explain and justify this to the P&T Committee (see page 11 of the P&T Guidelines). Example: One of our medical ethicists is appointed on the Basic Scientist – Tenure Pathway. The most typical and highly valued publications for most basic scientists are peer-reviewed journal articles. The most typical and highly valued publications in the field of medical ethics are single-authored books. It is within the Chair's letter that this fact should be explained to the College P&T Committee.
- If the candidate is a "mission critical collaborator," it is helpful for the Chair's letter explains how and why this is the case (see page 2 of the P&T Guidelines.)
- If some of the candidate's publications appear in novel media and have been peer-reviewed in novel ways, it is the candidate's responsibility to explain this to the College P&T Committee. It is helpful if the Chair's letter reiterates his/her understanding and value of the peer-review process.
- In the rare circumstances under which a faculty member decides to request promotion and/or tenure without the approval of the departmental P&T committee and the department chair, at least a brief statement of the lack of this support must appear in the candidate's P&T packet.