

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES FOR MID-PROBATIONARY REVIEWS

As noted in the UCAPT Manual, University policy states that “there is a particularly thorough review midway through the probationary period” for tenure track faculty. This review provides the opportunity to give tenure-track faculty members a clear evaluation of their accomplishments to date and of their prospects for tenure. At the recent Provost’s retreat, the deans agreed that all schools would provide candidates with a written summary of the results of these reviews. Specific recommendations include:

1. At a minimum, each dossier should include an up-to-date CV, a personal statement, samples of scholarly and/or creative work, and an assessment of teaching (for example, student evaluations and classroom observations). Schools might request other information, as relevant to the field, from the candidate. As noted in the UCAPT Manual, “while it has not been customary to use external referees, a department may utilize a few external referees if this would be useful.”
2. The decision on how best to have faculty review the dossier is left up to each school. For example, in some cases there are votes of all faculty members who are eligible to vote on the tenure case (either by independent written evaluation or following discussion of the dossier at a meeting), whereas in other cases there are subcommittees of top senior scholars. Each department’s procedures should be approved by the dean and should ensure that there will be a candid and rigorous review. The faculty committee report is included in the dossier.
3. The dean or the dean’s delegate (vice dean, department chair) should prepare a written letter to the candidate at the conclusion of the process. The purpose of the letter is to provide the faculty member with constructive criticism that is placed within the context of the larger tenure and promotion process. In particular, it is important that candidates be referred to the UCAPT Manual and that they understand that tenure decisions involve input from a chain of individuals and committees, and are not determined by the department. Every letter needs to include a clear statement such as the following: “While this letter is not meant to predict a specific outcome of the tenure review process, we hope that you find this input valuable in planning your ongoing efforts.”
4. In keeping with the UCAPT Manual’s statement that “one purpose of this review is...to determine if the candidate is making sufficient progress toward tenure to have his or her contract renewed through the mandatory Tenure Decision Date,” the letter should include a clear message about whether the contract will be renewed. In the case that a decision is made to non-renew, please contact the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs to discuss the necessary process.
5. In addition to providing the faculty member with the letter, we agreed that there should be a conversation between the dean or the dean’s delegate and the faculty member about the outcome of the review process. The conversation is a good opportunity to work with the faculty member to develop a clear plan for the remaining years of the probationary period.
6. The completed dossier is due in the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs’ office in May of the year in which it was conducted (See UCAPT Manual). The vice provost will review every dossier and provide feedback on any areas that require clarification or correction. In addition, he or she is available to meet with any dean or dean’s representative to provide feedback on specific cases.