



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Deans and Department Chairs

FROM: Christopher Bracey  
Provost and EVP for Academic Affairs

RE: Tenure, Promotion, Research Faculty, Emeritus Status, and Sabbaticals

DATE: August 6, 2021

It is time for each dean and department chair to begin preparation for the process of consideration of eligible faculty for tenure and/or promotion. This includes tenure, contract and research professors. It also is the time to begin the process of considering recommendations of emeritus status and requests for sabbaticals.

It is extremely important to get this process initiated early in the fall term, in order to assure that everything is completed in a timely fashion. As all of you know, the Faculty Code requires notification of candidates prior to June 30, 2022. Below I list the events in the annual calendar related to faculty personnel actions, and I set the deadlines that we have to meet in order to complete this process successfully.

Consistent with University process efficiency and sustainability efforts, the Provost's Office will only accept paperless submissions. Schools have the option of submitting PDF copies of dossiers and leave requests either via email (small volume) or via thumb- or zip-drives (large volume).

**Please note that the location where you should send your materials has been changed.** Electronic *tenure and promotion* materials should be delivered directly to Shelese Smith, Director for Full Time Faculty, in the Faculty Personnel Office, which is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of 1922 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20052. Please contact Ms. Smith via email ([shelesesmith@gwu.edu](mailto:shelesesmith@gwu.edu)) with any additional questions you may have regarding paperless submission of tenure and promotion materials. *All other electronic materials* can be delivered to the Faculty Personnel Office at [fpo\\_ft@gwu.edu](mailto:fpo_ft@gwu.edu).

1. **Recommendations for Tenure.** After review of the annual reports, which should be in your hands by now, you will know those faculty for whom you should begin the tenure review process and initiate the construction of dossiers for review. Decisions regarding tenure must be made by June 30, 2022.

Please recall that, except in the most extraordinary and well-documented circumstances, a recommendation for the award of tenure prior to the conclusion of the indicated probationary period – a date specified in each candidate's initial letter of appointment – will not be accepted. Similarly, a recommendation for promotion to associate professorship prior to the award of tenure will not be approved except under very rare circumstances. Concerning either of these categories, chairs should consult with their dean before initiating any action. The dean should then consult with me.

Each dean will have set a date for receipt of dossiers in the dean's office. **Completed recommendations and accompanying dossiers delivered through the dean's office must be received no later than Friday, February 4, 2022.** In tenure cases involving a non-concurrence, the original dossier may not be changed, but an addendum to the case may be submitted by the recommending faculty to clarify or strengthen their recommendation.

2. **Recommendation for Promotion.** The review and assessment of candidates for promotion should be undertaken with the same rigorous documentation following the same general procedures as review of tenure cases. Letters of transmittal by chair and dean should address with equal specificity the criteria for promotion established by the school and department.

Because no set term exists for decisions concerning promotion, we have some leeway to allow for construction of the strongest possible dossier. Chairs who are in any doubt concerning the readiness of a particular case should consider a confidential consultation with their dean to seek a tentative assessment of the probable response of the school's tenure and promotion committee to the candidate's record as represented in the curriculum vitae. The schools and deans will normally consider tenure cases first and promotion cases second. To be assured of action during this academic year, **completed dossiers and recommendations for promotion must be received no later than Friday, March 11, 2022.**

3. **Promotion of Research Faculty.** Recommendations for promotion of research faculty should be submitted on the special forms available online at <http://provost.gwu.edu/forms>. Chairs should submit to their dean the form and accompanying curriculum vitae for each candidate together with a brief letter of justification. Research faculty who are candidates for promotion should have scholarly or professional qualifications or experience that are generally comparable in quantity and distinction to those of full-time faculty at the relevant rank. No promotion should be recommended merely to achieve a higher salary.

To be assured of action during this academic year, **completed dossiers and recommendations for promotion must be received by the Faculty Personnel Office no later than Friday, March 11, 2022.**

4. **Recommendation of Emeritus Status.** When members of the faculty with long and distinguished service to the university retire, they may be recommended by their department for emeritus status. Faculty eligible for consideration for emeritus status are university professors, professors, adjunct professors, clinical professors, research professors, associate professors and associate clinical professors. Please note that, based upon the Faculty Code, faculty at the rank of assistant professor are not eligible to be considered for emeritus status. Because the awarding of emeritus status requires Board of Trustees' approval, and emeritus status is awarded during commencement, **recommendations must be received by the Faculty Personnel Office no later than Friday, January 7, 2022.** If chairs know of faculty members who are considering retirement, discreet inquiries should be made in order to facilitate department action early in the new year.
5. **Requests for Sabbatical.** Requests for sabbatical leaves and leaves without salary during AY 2021-22 should be initiated by the end of the 2020 fall semester. **All such applications must be received by the Faculty Personnel Office not later than Friday, December 17, 2021.** Please announce this deadline to your faculty as soon as possible. Sabbatical applications are available

online at <http://provost.gwu.edu/forms>. Other types of leave should be requested by memorandum. It is the chair's responsibility to verify with the Faculty Personnel Office that a faculty member's years of service meet eligibility requirements for sabbatical before endorsing the application.

Time served, in and of itself, does not guarantee acceptance of a sabbatical application. Substantively, each applicant must describe fully a realistic project of some significance that will evidently contribute either to his or her teaching or to the scholarly advancement of the applicant in the discipline. Presentation of evidence of application for a major national fellowship or an external grant to support the sabbatical work is strongly recommended. A thorough report of progress on the sabbatical project must be submitted to the Faculty Personnel Office at the end of each sabbatical that is granted. Submission of that report is a condition of eligibility for future sabbaticals.

Procedurally, the chair and dean must be persuaded that the applicant's role in the department can be satisfactorily filled in her or his absence. Otherwise, the applicant may be asked to defer sabbatical leave. If you know in advance that deferral is desirable, the applicant need not complete the form describing the project. Rather, the chair should submit an appropriate memorandum, with the dean's concurrence requesting deferral, under the indicated circumstances.

**Summary of deadline dates when all materials are due:**

Friday, December 17, 2021	Requests for Sabbatical
Friday, January 7, 2022	Recommendations for Emeritus Status
Friday, February 4, 2022	Recommendations for Tenure
Friday, March 11, 2022	Recommendations for Promotion (regular and research faculty)

In order to meet my deadlines, the dean of each school should set within-school dates to be met. Please follow these deadlines closely. Moreover, do not hesitate to get completed dossiers to my office prior to the deadlines if at all possible.

cc: Shelese Smith, Director, Faculty Affairs (Full Time Faculty)  
Christopher Bracey, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

## **ATTACHMENT: 2021 Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure Dossiers**

The criteria of sustained excellence required for promotion and tenure as stated in the Faculty Code language (most recently approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2019) is the standard for promotion and tenure. Specifically, it states that promotion and tenure decisions should be for those who “achieved excellence in their disciplines through their contributions to research, scholarship, or creative work in the arts (hereinafter scholarship), teaching, and engagement in service, and who demonstrate the potential to continue to do so, so that the university may advance its mission of scholarship, higher education, and service to the community.” It is incumbent that schools and Departments putting candidates up for tenure or promotion demonstrate that the candidate has met this standard. The preparation of the file, the solicitation of letters, and the decision of the faculty (either a department’s decision or the school as a whole in non-departmentalized units) should be made with the goal of assessing the candidate in terms of this excellence standard.

The tenure and/or promotion process for faculty leads to major career milestones, and these decisions, albeit difficult ones, are among the most important decisions that we, as faculty and administrators, make. For this reason, it is important that the dossiers of the candidates be compiled carefully to facilitate what is a necessarily rigorous process. In particular, these dossiers must thoroughly and accurately convey evidence of accomplishments in teaching, research, and service as appropriate for the candidate’s discipline.

Thus, the dossier should be such that it allows all those involved in the review process to assess whether the candidate has met a standard of excellence in scholarship, teaching and service. Further, the dossier must demonstrate that the candidate has the strong potential to continue to be productive in those three areas. This is especially important once the dossier leaves the originating department and moves through the school’s promotion and tenure committee, to the dean, and finally to the provost. The key is to put forth dossiers that are useful within and external to the originating department, especially in the sense that they are meaningful to reviewers outside the candidate’s discipline.

Please read this guideline document carefully, and share it with your colleagues. You may find some aspects of your process that can be enhanced, or you may have a component in your process that you wish to recommend to others. As mentioned, we are striving to have dossiers that have complete information and a process that is comparable across schools. As in the past, these guidelines are to serve as the minimum standard for a dossier that will withstand the rigors of review at all levels. Different departments may choose to provide additional information in their respective dossiers, and this is fine as long as this is done similarly for candidates in the same field. Finally, in instances in which there is not a consensus regarding the merits of the case, additional external assessments of the scholarly record are likely to be solicited.

Following review by the school’s promotion and tenure committee and the dean, the dean should prepare a letter of recommendation that transmits the dossier—including all relevant documents mentioned below—to the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs or his designee. Please hold any supplementary materials in the dean’s office. Consistent with University process efficiency and sustainability efforts, the Provost’s Office accepts only paperless submissions. Schools have the option of submitting PDF copies of dossiers either via email (small volume) or via thumb- or zip-drives (large volume).

The importance of the tenure and/or promotion process at GW cannot be over-emphasized. Your close

attention to these guidelines as well as any supplementary guidelines issued by your dean is greatly appreciated.

## **Contents of Dossiers**

In order to provide dossiers that are easy to review and contain the key data and evaluations to underpin the recommendations, a dossier should contain five sections in the following order shown below:

### **1) Transmitting Letters**

- From the dean (revealing whether they concur or non-concur with the faculty)
- From the chair of the school's promotion and tenure committee (revealing whether they concur or non-concur with the faculty. In non-departmentalized schools, this constitutes the recommendation of the faculty)
- From the department chair (revealing the recommendation of the faculty)

### **2) Curriculum Vitae of Candidate**

#### **3) Teaching**

- Teaching statement and reflection by candidate
- Courses
  - a) Courses taught during period of evaluation
  - b) Illustrative example
- Teaching Effectiveness Internal peer reviews
  - a) Student feedback and comments provided by department.
  - b) Teaching awards or other special recognition related to teaching.
- Development, Continual Improvement and Pedagogical Innovations
- Impact on Department, GW, and the Discipline

#### **4) Research/Scholarship**

- Research statement and reflection by candidate
- Outside evaluations
- Selection process for external evaluators, particularly which evaluators were recommended by the candidate, the review committee or both.
- The list of evaluators to whom letters were sent but who did not reply must be included.
- Brief description of each evaluator's credentials
- Copy of materials submitted to external evaluators
- External evaluation letters

#### **5) External/University/Departmental Service**

- Service statement and reflection by candidate
- Evaluation summary
- Special recognition for service

## **Dual School Appointments**

Recommendations for the tenure (and/or promotion) of faculty holding primary appointments in more than one school require the approval of both deans. Thus, the chair needs to assure that

recommendations meet the criteria and the procedures of both schools. Normally, copies of the dossier and letter of transmittal should be sent simultaneously to both deans.

### **Non-Departmental Solicitation of Additional Information**

According to the Faculty Code (rev. 2019), “[w]ith advance notice and in consultation with the department, the School-Wide Personnel Committee may request and gather additional information, documentation, or clarification regarding recommendations they are considering.” The Faculty Code further provides that “[a]ny additional information obtained by the School-Wide Personnel Committee shall be shared with the referring department, and the Department may provide a written response to that information.” Please note that members of the School-Wide Personnel Committee who are also members of the same department of the candidate are typically recused and may only provide information about the candidate through their department (without attribution) to the School-Wide Personnel Committee.

### **Detailed Description of Dossier Sections**

The following sections provide guidance on minimal expectations in the structure of portfolios, layout of curriculum vitae, letters from the department chair, chair of the school’s promotion and tenure committee, and the dean, and layout of the dossier itself.

#### **1) Transmitting Letters**

The transmittal letters from the Department, the School-Wide APT Committee and the Dean set the tone of the dossier. It is expected that each of these letters will be analytical in nature and assess the candidate in terms of the School and University criteria for tenure or promotion. Letters from all three are required in all cases – regardless of whether there is a concurrence or non-concurrence with the recommendation of the faculty, and regardless of whether tenure or promotion is being recommended. And, if there is any information that the Department or School is aware of that is not self-evident in the dossier and may impact the assessment of the record, this should be revealed in the transmittal letters. Because transmittal letters (along with the reports produced by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in instances where there is a non-concurrence) may contain a discussion of the divisions that exist within the faculty and cite the evaluations of the external reviewers, these letters are confidential and should not be shared with the candidate.

The school wide Promotion and Tenure committee’s or dean’s letter should convey clearly their concurrence or non-concurrence with the faculty’s recommendation and the basis for this conclusion. In departmentalized units, the code requires the School-Wide Personnel Committee and Dean to review all tenure and promotion recommendations and issue their own independent concurrence or nonconcurrence with the Department’s recommendation. The Dean and School-Wide Personnel Committee recommendations should take into account their assessment of the Department’s arguments and the candidate’s portfolio, and their own school-wide perspective. The goal for these reviews is to ensure comparable quality and excellence across the school. Both the Department and School promotion and tenure committee letters should include information on the votes that took place related to a particular case (including number of members absent or abstaining).

Since this whole process begins with the department chair’s letter revealing the recommendation of the faculty (in departmentalized schools), this letter is pivotal in the decisions of the school promotion and tenure committee, the Dean, and the Provost to concur or not. In some departments, the personnel committee writes this letter, but in any case, all who vote on the decision to recommend tenure or

promotion should review it. For ease of reading, the letter should begin with a statement of the recommendation along with the departmental vote underpinning it. After that, using the materials submitted by the candidate or collected by the department as the basis, a thorough written evaluation of the candidate's teaching, research/scholarship, and service should follow. These latter three sections of the department chair's letter set the stage and tone for reviewers outside the department. Finally, from the view of the strategic programmatic directions of the department, it is of value to have the chair comment on the candidate's contributions to achieving those aims.

## 2) Curriculum Vitae

The candidate's CV provides the reviewer a quick snapshot of where the candidate stands. At a minimum, it should contain:

- Degrees held, university granting, field, year
- Positions held, where, period of time
- List of scholarly publications with title, journal or book reference, but separated according to:
  - Books (single or co-authored)
  - Book chapters (edited or reviewed)
  - Edited books or proceedings
  - Refereed journal articles
  - Refereed articles in books
  - Refereed articles in conference proceedings
  - Non-refereed publications
  - \* [For those professors in art, music, or other comparable fields, obviously, exhibitions, performances, etc., with appropriate citations, should be listed.]
- List of invited scholarly talks – full citation
  - Conferences
  - Elsewhere
- Other publications, talks, or appearances of significance to candidate's discipline
- External grants or contracts received where candidate served as principal investigator or co-principal investigator (title, source, amount, period of time)
- Honors and awards received
- Professional affiliations
- Ph.D. dissertations directed and completed, with title, student name and year
- M.A./M.S. theses directed and completed, with title, student name and year
- Professional and other service activities (for example, chair of a committee in a professional society)

## 3) Teaching

**Teaching Statement and Reflection: Past, Present, and Future.** In no more than three pages, with specific examples from courses taught, the candidates will describe their approach to teaching, what they have learned from their teaching, how they have sought to improve their teaching, and how they will continue to develop their program of teaching.

### **Courses Taught During the Period of Evaluation.**

- Course list. List of courses taught, the enrollment, whether graduate or undergraduate, and whether a new preparation or redesign was required.

- Illustrative example. For at least one course from the list above and using no more than one page per course, candidate will list the learning objectives/outcomes and the topics, the teaching approach, some of the learning activities, and some example assessments of learning outcomes used.

#### **Teaching Effectiveness.**

- **Internal peer reviews.** Departments are encouraged to provide reviews from more than one peer who observes the candidate's teaching. Peer evaluations are especially valuable when they are done longitudinally over several years prior to the candidate's year of review.
- **Student feedback, both scores and comments, provided by department.** Taking scores into account can provide validation of the internal feedback and written comments of the students. Broad based questions such as "My Overall Assessment of the Instructor" may be useful for identifying those who are particularly strong or weak instructors. However, the interpretation of these scores should be viewed in the context of research showing that evaluations vary predictably with teaching quality, gender and race, the nature and size of the course being taught, and the rigor of the grading. The accomplishment by students of the learning objectives of a course should also be considered in the evaluation teaching effectiveness.
- **Teaching awards or other special recognition of teaching.**
- **Development, Continual Improvement and Pedagogical Innovations.** Description of efforts taken to develop or apply new techniques in teaching to improve learning.
- **Impact on Department, GW, and the Discipline.** Description of the impact on curriculum development and pedagogy at the university and in the discipline.

#### **4) Research Scholarship**

In many respects, this is the part of the dossier that requires the most careful handling owing to its involvement of external evaluators.

**Research Statement and Reflection.** In no more than three pages the candidates will describe their research focus and the contribution their research has made to their discipline or field.

**External Letters.** Independent letters of assessment (and not endorsement for tenure) by highly qualified, external evaluators should form a significant portion of the documentation concerning research and scholarship, and professional service. External letter writers are not expected to assess the teaching strength of the candidate. The department chair's transmittal letter to the external evaluator should be carefully worded in order to have the best possibility of obtaining a thorough and complete evaluation of the candidate's scholarly work. It should be clear in the letter that all we seek from the evaluator is a thorough evaluation of the scholarly works submitted for review, not an opinion as to whether the candidate should be tenured and/or promoted, since the latter recommendation requires other evaluative input, in particular, teaching.

**Minimum of Five Letters from Highly Qualified Referees.** Having said the above, the number and nature of the external evaluators should be discussed. At a minimum, there should be five highly qualified referees. To the extent there are good reasons why obtaining five letters is not feasible, you can request waivers of this requirement in writing to the provost. Under extraordinary circumstances, such a request will be granted. However, such requests should be made prior to the review of the file. The selection of external letter writers includes a mix of senior individuals proposed by the faculty candidate and some selected by the tenure committee (or whatever group in your school assembles the

tenure case). There should be two lists of evaluators from which to select: one from the candidate and one from the department. Which list any particular letter comes from should be indicated in the tenure case.

**The Importance of Impartiality.** In selecting evaluators, five of them may not include the candidate's dissertation director, a collaborator on scholarly work with the candidate (for example, co-author), or a colleague from a different institution (current or former) with whom the candidate has worked or continues to work. **The key is to have a minimum of five letters from impartial evaluators.** Once this requirement is fulfilled, other letters are welcome, but should be carefully identified. All letters received become part of the dossier.

**The "Excellence" Standard, School and Departmental Criteria, and Confidentiality.** External letter writers should be informed that the university's standard for tenure requires the candidate to have: "achieved excellence in their disciplines through their contributions to research, scholarship, or creative work in the arts (hereinafter scholarship), teaching, and engagement in service, and who demonstrate the potential to continue to do so..." **External letter writers should be instructed to refer to this standard in their written qualitative assessment of the candidate's research, scholarship or creative work.** And, they should be told that the letters are normally considered confidential and not shared with the candidate unless required by a legal or administrative process. **Since this aspect is such an important part of the promotion and tenure process, deans may wish to supplement with even more detailed guidance, including school specific criteria that are consistent with the university standard.**

## **5) External/University/Departmental Service**

**Service Statement and Reflection.** In no more than three pages the candidates will describe their service focus and the contribution their service has made to the department, school, university and to their field. A key component of this section is the department's evaluation summary of what is the record of the candidate. The detailed record may be part of the candidate's vitae or submitted as a separate listing. This should include any awards or other recognition received for service.