# TENURE SYSTEM AND RESEARCH NON-TENURE TRACK PROMOTION AND TENURE GUIDELINES 2016-17

# PART II

# SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF AN EFFECTIVE PROMOTION AND TENURE CASE

All requests for further information and explanation regarding Campus Promotion and Tenure (P&T) policies should be directed toward Renée Taylor, the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs: (312) 413-3470 | rtaylor@uic.edu.
Questions about procedures and instructions for the corresponding forms should be directed toward Campus P&T Coordinators, Andrew Maybach and Faizan H. Abid in the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs:
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## SECTION 1: GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES AND UNIT EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

The overall goal of the P&T process is to offer a mechanism for candidates to make as clear and as comprehensive a presentation of their accomplishments as possible. Simultaneously, the process should permit those in the collegial role of reviewers as much information and as much context as necessary to render an evaluation of the candidacy.

Based on the experience at the campus-level review in recent years, the following observations are offered to both candidates and unit executive officers and paper preparers.

## SECTION 2: CAMPUS LEVEL P&T REVIEWS

P&T committees above the level of an individual's appointment judge how well the case has been made either for the granting of indefinite tenure or for promotion. It is not the quality of any one piece of work or the length of the dossier but the overall quality of the candidate's record and the accompanying documentation that determine the outcome. Remember that faculty on these committees welcome guidance in their search for indicators of quality.

## SECTION 3: UNIT EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S / PAPER PREPARER'S ROLES

**A. Norms and Expectations in the Candidate's Field:**
University evaluators often seek guidance regarding disciplinary norms, publication outlets, etc. Contextual information about the discipline or sub-discipline should be provided in the summary of unit norms and expectations. This could include an explanation of the significance of the order of authors in multi-author publications. Further details about best practices in the discipline can be helpful when added at appropriate places in the body of the papers.

Candidates for promotion also seek information about the expectations of their department and college. Unit executive officers are responsible for effectively communicating the expectations of the unit, college, and university. Additionally, it is required by campus policy that unit executive officers conduct an annual performance evaluation and meet regularly with individual faculty members to discuss goals and expectations. Regular and frequent feedback on career plans and progress of faculty in the tenure and non-tenure systems is required in addition to the mid-probationary review, which is also a requirement for tenure-system faculty.

**B. Making the Case to Scholars from Other Disciplines:**
Candidates and unit executive officers should remember that at the campus level, review is conducted by scholars who typically are **not** from the candidates' disciplines. Thus, candidates and unit executive officers should not use jargon or assume the readers are familiar with the kinds of scholarship typical of the field.

**The significance of accomplishments should be communicated in the unit executive officer's statement--details should be included only to the extent that they help make the case that the candidate's contributions have been significant. For those in the tenure system, impact should be considered, as it is reflected in the independence, unique academic signature/contributions to the field, national and/or international reputation, recognition by scholarly peers, and potential for a continued upward trajectory into the future.**

**C. Apparently Negative Comments:**

If external referees make unfavorable comments, it is best to address them directly in the departmental and college justifications. If the points are valid, acknowledgment is appropriate. If the executive officer disagrees with criticism, an argument should be made to the campus reviewers as to why the eternal criticism is not relevant, warranted or accurate. Ignoring criticism may be interpreted erroneously. The same advice applies to the need for addressing weaknesses in any part of the record.

## SECTION 4: TEACHING

**A. Role of Documentation in Establishing Quality:**

Teaching quality needs to be well documented. When assertions are made about excellence of teaching, evidence must be provided. Campus-level reviewers want to credit teaching, but cannot do so without evidence. Multiple sources of evaluation such as student evaluations of teaching, peer evaluations of teaching, and any other types of evidence of teaching excellence are required and contribute to a stronger case. Evaluations that are very recent alone do not carry as much weight as evaluations from departments that can show that there is a continuing departmental process that assesses performance in the classroom, lab, seminar, or other teaching modes.

**B. Team/Co-Teaching:**

Where a candidate is not fully responsible for a course, the nature of the candidate's contributions to the class/course role should be clarified. Evaluative comments pertaining only to the candidate, and not of other instructors, should be included.

*Due to the risk of a perceived or actual conflict of interest situation, candidates are discouraged from soliciting teaching evaluations from current doctoral students supervised by the candidate. This does not preclude the ability to include evaluations that are a part of a regular review process, or those that are unsolicited. Under very exceptional circumstances, approaching a doctoral student for an evaluation specific to the P&T process may be deemed necessary. The unit executive officer or paper preparer should provide a rationale for such circumstances in the unit executive officer statement.

## SECTION 5: RESEARCH/SCHOLARY WORKS

**A. Publications:**

It is important to draw attention to significant work that has undergone peer review. Where appropriate, citation indices and other quantitative indicators of impact may be helpful. The UIC library is a helpful resource for faculty in this regard. Be aware that annals and proceedings vary as to the level of creativity and in the rigor by which contributions are chosen. So please indicate the nature of the research and kind of review to which such publications were subjected. The same should be done for monographs and chapters in books. In some disciplines a chapter in a book, for example, is assumed to be a review of literature; in other disciplines, a chapter may be original scholarship. Communication of the strengths of a case to those in other disciplines is important.

**B. Quality of Publication Outlets:**

An excellent way to document the quality and significance of a candidate's scholarship is to address the quality of the publication outlets (including objective rankings, where available). In some disciplines, citation measures of the work, indicators of journal impact, and press reputations can be important. Contact the library for documentation of ratings, ranking and reputation of the outlets. If given enough time, the library staff can be very helpful in identifying such material.

**C. Funding:**

Success in competitions that involve peer review is (as is the case with publications) taken as a reliable sign of scholarly peer recognition. Note that faculty research is funded by multiple sources, and it is sometimes difficult for reviewers to know if a particular funding source relies on peer review in evaluating and awarding funds. So, for less well-known sources of funding, it is important to indicate when the award is based on peer review. (Note that funding is not in itself an indicator of academic merit but should be considered alongside the other indicators of impact and peer recognition).

The availability of and reliance on external funding varies considerably across fields and it is important that campus reviewers be told the situation and expectations of the candidate's discipline.

**D. Collaborative Work:**

Because interdisciplinary, multi-investigator, and other collaborative research and scholarly work is an often-utilized approach to scholarship it is important to provide reviewers with sufficient detail about the level of independence of the candidate's role in research and teaching efforts. In the case of research, use Part V.C. of the P&T Dossier Forms, to provide contributions of the candidate. Unit executive officers must solicit letters from individuals who have had a substantial collaboration with the candidate. Letters from those individuals should document the unique contributions of the candidate to the joint work. The unit executive officer evaluation in the P&T Forms must address the value of the candidate’s collaborative work.

While committees recognize that in many disciplines collaboration is becoming increasingly important, candidates are strongly advised to seek ways of establishing independence, particularly if they are collaborating with individuals who are more senior in rank.

F.A.Q's about Letter from Collaborators

**E. Creative Works:**
Entries in the "Creative Works…" category should be accompanied by statements that explain how the work of performance or show was reviewed, juried, etc. Campus reviewers need assistance in understanding the significance of such accomplishments.

**F. Selection and Solicitation of Referees for the External Evaluation:**
Because the choice of outside referees is critical to evaluating the candidates, the Guidelines in Part I. Section 3F, should be followed scrupulously.

It is recommended that the external referees be approached in two stages. Please see Part I, Section 3F of the Guidelines.

**G. Documentation of Credentials of Referees:**
Campus level reviewers rely heavily on the judgment of the outside referees. Referees' credentials should be clear and their relationship to the candidate as neutral as possible e.g., not co-authors, not past or present mentors, not past or present departmental colleagues. We suggest that referees be asked to state in their evaluation letters what their contact and relationship with the candidate has been. With this information, campus reviewers can give proper weight to the reviewer's comments. (See Guidelines Part I, Sec. 3 F).

**H. Thank You:**
Referees often want to know the outcome of our deliberations. A thank you letter that communicates the final outcome of our deliberations would be appropriate.

## SECTION 6: SERVICE

**A. Departmental Expectations:**
There are varying expectations across units regarding the participation of junior faculty in service activities. Unit executive officers are encouraged to specify their unit's expectations in the section of the papers that ask for details regarding the norms of the discipline. Assistant Professors are not expected to carry a heavy service burden. They should normally attend all departmental meetings but not generally serve on university committees or do wider service to the profession or community.

**B. Significance of Contributions:**
Service entails many different types of activities, and it sometimes is difficult to document the excellence and impact of these activities. If the candidate feels it necessary, an explanation of the impact of these activities can be included.

Grant review activity is considered a service and may be recorded in the P&T Dossier Forms under Section III.F., Service to the Profession/Discipline.

## SECTION 7: STATEMENTS BY CANDIDATES

The candidate's statement of current and planned research/creative endeavors should be brief and **limited to one-page.** A technical presentation or lengthy chronological account is not useful.

Do not repeat the faculty information found elsewhere in the papers. The campus reviewers want to understand the candidate's long-term agenda, progress made, significance of the work, etc. Again, remember that typically the reviewer is not from the candidate's field. The same guidelines apply to statements concerning interdisciplinary work, teaching and service.

It is required that referees receive a copy of the candidate's Statement of Current and Planned Research, in addition to the CV and publications.