

Tenure, Promotion and Reappointment (TPR) Best Practices

The purpose of this document is to help Clemson University Departments develop tenure, promotion, and reappointment (TPR) Guidelines that are consistent, fair, transparent, and understandable to all parties involved in the process. These best practices (BP) seek a balance between the desire for consistency across Departmental TPR Guidelines university-wide and the need for academic and disciplinary freedom.

The process of tenure, promotion, and reappointment is one of the most important milestones in academic life that faculty encounter. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most common sources of confusion, friction, and inequity. It is therefore absolutely essential that everyone involved in TPR take their responsibilities very seriously and strive to uphold the very best standards of practice. Thus, the Provost commissioned an ad hoc committee¹ to develop the following best practices document.² **The items identified below are not intended to be prescriptive and are not mandates. They are, rather, recommendations for content faculty may want to include in their Departmental TPR guidelines.**

Best Practices Related to Departmental TPR Guidelines

- 1. The Departmental TPR Guidelines should identify all the major criteria and decision processes used for evaluation. Of course, it is not possible to anticipate all the specific forms of evidence that could be produced at TPR, but departments should strive to make it clear to all parties what types of materials will be considered and to what extent.**
- 2. The chair of the Departmental TPR Committee should review Departmental TPR Guidelines annually to ensure consistency with the Faculty Manual and recommend changes as necessary to the departmental faculty. Departmental Guidelines should receive external review regularly.**
- 3. Only criteria identified in the Departmental TPR Guidelines, which have been approved by the faculty in accordance with the Faculty Manual, can be considered in decisions.**
- 4. Policies on solicitation, handling, and access to external letters should ensure that all involved understand confidentiality rules and standards.**
- 5. The evaluators at all stages in the tenure process should know and apply the Departmental TPR Guidelines. Therefore, all individuals involved in TPR should review the relevant sections of the Faculty Manual as well as Departmental TPR Guidelines at the beginning of the academic year.**
- 6. If the Departmental TPR Guidelines allow for solicitation of information from faculty members, the process by which this will be collected and used should be specified and only information relevant to the stated Departmental TPR Guidelines can be considered. A formal request for such material should be made by the Departmental TPR Committee.**

¹ This TPR Best Practices document was drafted by the Faculty Senate's 2014 ad hoc TPR Best Practices Committee: Fran McGuire, Chair & Faculty Manual Consultant; Antonis Katsiyannis, 2014-15 Faculty Senate President; Kelly Smith, 2013-14 Faculty Senate President; John Meriwether, 2014 Grievance Board Chair; Jane Clark Lindle, 2013 Grievance Board Chair; and, Julia Frugoli, Provost Fellow. Leslie Gonzalez, Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership, served as a consultant to the committee, and Monica Patterson and Anderson Rouse of the Faculty Senate Office assisted.

² *Good Practice in Tenure Evaluation: Advice for Tenured Faculty, Department Chairs, and Academic Administrators*. (2000). A Joint Project of: The American Council on Education (ACE), The American Association of University Professors (AAUP), and United Educators Insurance Risk Retention Group (UE). Retrieved from <http://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/files/Good%20Practice%20in%20Tenure%20Evaluation.pdf>

7. **The Departmental TPR Guidelines should address whether evaluators will consider events occurring after the tenure application has been submitted.**
8. **In circumstances where members of the Departmental TPR Committee disagree on interpretations of the Departmental TPR Guidelines, there should be a procedure for addressing the ambiguity in the TPR Guidelines, and the resulting resolution should be clearly reflected in future Guidelines.**
9. **Unsolicited information should not be considered as part of the TPR decision. The Departmental TPR Committee should be aware that serious allegations may need to be referred to other University offices for investigation. If you are unsure, contact the Clemson University's Office of Access and Equity.**
10. **The Departmental TPR Committee should reach an unambiguous decision clearly indicating whether the Committee recommends or does not recommend the candidate for reappointment, tenure and/or promotion, and should communicate the decision in a single letter that reflects all points of view.**
11. **Issues from candidates' personal lives should neither be discussed nor considered when making TPR decisions. Any conversations that would be inappropriate in a Departmental TPR Committee meeting are also inappropriate outside the Departmental TPR Committee meeting.**
12. **Any administrator involved in the TPR process should apply the same level of scrutiny to all candidates, regardless of the candidate's discipline.**
13. **In every reappointment letter, the Departmental TPR Committee should provide practical guidance for future efforts to meet the requirements, without promises or guarantees that cannot be honored.**

Best Practices Related to the Treatment of Candidates

14. **The candidate should be given clear feedback on their progress toward tenure, preferably from a joint meeting of the Department Chair, Departmental TPR Committee Chair and candidate held no later than two years prior to a faculty member's penultimate year, to review the non-tenured faculty's evaluation based specifically on tenure criteria, reflecting the faculty member's entire body of work (as defined in the TPR Guidelines) to that point. In this meeting, the Department Chair should also review Departmental TPR process with the faculty member.**
15. **When an individual is midstream through the tenure process or in penultimate year and there is a change to Departmental TPR Guidelines during this time, these policies should specify which policies/document version apply to the applicant. No changes in Departmental TPR Guidelines should be made if a candidate is within at most two years of the tenure decision unless the candidate agrees to the changes. The Departmental TPR Guidelines should specify how changes of the Departmental TPR Guidelines will affect non-tenured faculty outside the two-year window.**
16. **Information provided to non-tenured faculty should be consistent with Departmental TPR and Faculty Manual Guidelines.**

- 17. There are no increased expectations for those who receive tenure clock extensions. The clock stops during any extension.**
- 18. The Department should not change the faculty member's duties, responsibilities and professional opportunities as a result of a negative tenure decision, without consent of the faculty member.**
- 19. The candidates should be directed to the documents related to the TPR process, including Departmental TPR Guidelines, relevant sections of the Faculty Manual, and these Best Practices.**
- 20. At each point of the TPR process, the candidate should be able to see the recommendation letters of the Departmental TPR Committee, Department Chair and Dean. After receiving the Departmental TPR Committee's recommendation, the candidate should have the opportunity to meet with the Departmental TPR Chair to discuss any negative recommendation. Similar opportunities to meet with the Department Chair, College Dean and Provost should be provided after receiving their recommendations.**

Other Best Practices

- 21. The Departmental TPR Committee and Department Chair should maintain regular communication with each other to assure that, to the greatest degree possible, there is consistency between the Chair's annual evaluation and TPR Committee's annual reappointment recommendation for each untenured faculty member.**
- 22. The faculty and administration should maintain consistency over time in their ongoing and separate reviews of the work of each non-tenured faculty member.**
- 23. All TPR files should contain the proper information and should be retained after the decision.**