

Guidelines for Annual Review of Assistant Professors

Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science

1. Summary of Review Process during Probationary Period

Departments are required to monitor the progress of a tenure track faculty member throughout the probationary period (in accordance with *FPP 5.21 D (2)*). Such monitoring is accomplished in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences (AOS) by the establishment of a Mentor Committee at the commencement of the probationary faculty's appointment. Assistant professors are guided and evaluated throughout the probationary period for the purpose of providing constructive advice to maximize the chance for success. Extension of the annual contract beginning in the 2nd year of a 3-year contract requires that the assistant professor be making progress toward tenure in research, teaching, and service in a manner appropriate to his or her stage in the probationary process. Early in the Spring Semester of each year, except for the first year and the tenure year, the Mentor Committee shall arrange for an annual review of the faculty member's progress in the three areas of Teaching, Research, and Service. This review will be formalized in a letter to the Executive Committee of the Department that will consider the progress described therein and make recommendations for the probationary faculty's future activities with the intention of strengthening the eventual case for tenure. A letter describing the progress as reported in the Mentor Committee report as well as the suggestions for future work as discussed by the Executive Committee will then be forwarded to the probationary faculty member. In this way a detailed and regular record of the Department's assessment of the progress toward successful tenure will be documented for each probationary faculty member.

The Mentor Committee reviews in the 3rd, 5th, and 6th probationary years are the most comprehensive, and the reports of the Committee will serve both as summaries and evaluations. In these years the entire Executive Committee will examine the full trajectory of achievement and work yet to be done, focusing on both research success (number of articles, invited presentations, and successful grant proposals, etc), as well teaching success (the content of teaching evaluations, etc.). The review in the 2nd probationary year will focus mainly on ensuring that the assistant professor is "on track." The review in the 4th probationary year will focus on progress made since the 3rd year review, the first in which a contract renewal is at stake. In cases of potential early promotion, the Mentor Committee has the option of treating any given annual review as if it were the 6th and final probationary year before a decision on promotion must be made.

2. Status in the Probationary Period

The "probationary period" for assistant professors is typically 7 years on tenure track, with the recommendation on promotion being made during the 6th probationary year. Throughout this document "year in probationary period" refers to the year on tenure clock, not the actual number of years at UW-Madison. At recruitment, the letter of offer specifies at what "year" in the probationary period the assistant professor will begin.

Changes in the tenure clock are allowed by university policy, especially for reasons of family or illness. The faculty member should send a request for an adjustment of up to one year based on the birth or adoption of a child to the provost (with informational copies to the Chair and Dean) within one year of the birth or adoption. (Approval of such requests is presumed.) Requests based on other factors (e.g., disability, chronic illness, or significant responsibilities with respect to elder care or dependent care) should be sent by the faculty member to the Chair and should be made before the beginning of the 6th probationary year. (Approval of requests based on factors other than childbirth or adoption must be approved by the departmental Executive Committee and are then forwarded to the Dean, and the University Committee before action by the Provost.)

3. Criteria for Promotion

The Executive Committee recommends tenure and promotion based on an evaluation of the assistant professor's record of research, teaching, and service. The Executive Committee requires proof of excellence in past performance together with a credible forecast that a faculty member's intellectual vitality will continue for years to come. There is no entitlement to tenure based upon a record that is merely competent and satisfactory. The criteria listed below are consistent with those outlined in *FPP 7.14*.

A strong record in research includes a coherent body of work, focused on a well-defined area or topic, that moves significantly beyond the candidate's Ph.D. dissertation. Such work must have been reviewed in a refereed process and should reflect the highest standards of rigor employing methods appropriate to the candidate's field. The Executive Committee looks for evidence of originality, standing in the profession outside the university and the state, as well as the likelihood of continued outstanding performance and growth. The latter criteria should be manifest by evidence of a significant future project or projects in at least a preliminary stage of development.

A strong record in teaching should be shown through such evidence as peer and student evaluations, course and curriculum development, syllabi, and other pedagogical materials.

The record in service should show an engagement in the service life of the department and campus that the Mentor Committee, Department Chair, and other colleagues have deemed appropriate.

4. Mentor Committee

The Department Chair appoints a Mentor Committee for each assistant professor during the first year of the assistant professor's contract. Good communication between assistant professors and their Mentor Committees is essential. The Mentor Committee should meet regularly to provide assistant professors with guidance, feedback on work in progress, and advice about any aspect of research, teaching, and service.

Function: As a subcommittee of the Executive Committee, the Mentor Committee has a dual function:

1. To advise and mentor the assistant professor with regard to research, teaching, and service; and

2. To assist the Executive Committee to evaluate annually the assistant professor's progress toward tenure and to recommend promotion, extension, or non-retention. This evaluation takes the form of the annual Mentor Committee Report, a copy of which goes to the assistant professor at the same time that it is submitted to the Executive Committee. The Report is subject to review by the Executive Committee and is filed in the assistant professor's Personnel File (in the chair's office).

Membership of Mentor Committee:

1. The Mentor Committee typically has two members.
2. Despite our small size, it is desirable that the members of the Mentor Committee have familiarity with the assistant professor's sub-discipline within the Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences.
3. The members of the Mentor Committee will generally remain the same throughout the probationary period.
4. The Department Chair will appoint replacements if members are no longer available for whatever reason.
5. Mentor Committee members on leave have the option of involvement or lack of involvement in the annual review. In the event a faculty on leave does not intend to participate in the annual review, the chair may appoint a replacement.

5. Overview of the Annual Review

Assistant professors will be reviewed every spring, beginning in the second year of their initial three-year contract. A recommendation must be made on whether to extend the contract by one year, promote, or terminate the contract.

Preparation of Review: With guidance from the Mentor Committee, each assistant professor prepares a Summary File of materials related to research, teaching, and service for review by the Mentor Committee. This review is to be done in consultation with the assistant professor at an early spring meeting with the Mentor Committee.

Mentor Committee Report: After meeting with the candidate, the Mentor Committee submits a written report to the Executive Committee on the assistant professor's work. Reports in years 2 and 4 are meant to serve predominantly as summaries, while reviews in other years should balance summary and evaluation. At the end of the report the Mentor Committee will make a recommendation to the Executive Committee regarding a one-year extension.

Assistant Professor's Receipt of Report: The assistant professor will receive a copy of the Mentor Committee Report before the Executive Committee conducts its review and has the option of responding to the report. Such responses are to be addressed to the Mentor Committee.

Executive Committee Vote on Renewal or Non-Retention: The Executive Committee votes on signed ballots on whether or not to recommend to the Dean of the College a one-year extension of the contract in years 2 through 5 of the probationary period. The Executive Committee has the option of endorsing, appending additional materials to, or rejecting the report of the Mentor Committee. A copy of any amended materials will be sent to the assistant professor, who has the right to respond in writing.

a. Review File

Annual Update: With guidance from the Mentor Committee, the assistant professor is responsible for updating his or her Review File by early October of every year. The Review File should contain:

1. An updated CV,
2. An annual memo (1-2 pages) from the assistant professor to his or her Mentor Committee outlining the year's progress, and relevant information pertaining to research, teaching, and service,
3. Prior annual memos from the assistant professor to the Mentor Committee outlining achievements and goals for the year,
4. Prior Mentor Committee Reports, with additions of the Executive Committee, and with responses (if any) from the assistant professor,
5. Professional Activities Reports,
6. Peer evaluations of teaching,
7. Statistical summary sheets of student evaluations,
8. Syllabi for all courses,
9. Publications,
10. Additional materials: Assistant professors have the option of providing any additional material that attests to their progress toward tenure in research, teaching, and service (e.g., grant proposals, book contracts, manuscripts, pedagogical materials, etc.).

b. Peer Observations of Classroom Teaching

Requirements: The Physical Sciences Divisional Committee requires that “there should be one or two visits for each teaching year of the candidate’s probationary period, and preferably for each semester.”

Assignment of Reviewers: The Department Chair and Mentor Committee will assign faculty peer reviewers at least once and preferably twice a year. These reviewers may or may not be members of the Mentor Committee.

Scheduling Reviews: Faculty peer evaluators should contact assistant professors well in advance to arrange a mutually agreeable class period, preferably no later than the 12th

week of the semester. Ideally the same course will be reviewed multiple times, by the same faculty members, over the course of the probationary period. In this way descriptions of progress throughout the probationary period may be made.

Class Visits: Before the visit, the reviewer should communicate with the assistant professor to discuss the goals of the class he/she will attend and how it fits into the rest of the course in the context of the syllabus. The reviewer(s) will meet with the assistant professor after the class to discuss observed strengths and make constructive suggestions for improvement. This discussion may also include advice on assignments, responses to student writing, exam construction, and other pedagogical matters.

Written Reports: The visitor is responsible for sending a written report on the class visit to the faculty member and to the Department Chair no later than three weeks after the visit. The Department Chair is responsible for ensuring the completion and filing of reports in the assistant professor's Review File and Personnel File.

6. Chronology of Review during Probationary Period

The Mentor Committee's Report in any given year is written in the context of the Asst. Professor's CV and his/her brief statement regarding new work since the last review and details of future plans.

In the second and fourth years, the Mentor Committee Report is based primarily on objective metrics: the number of publications, invited presentations, grant proposals funded, student evaluation scores, and a list of service activities. In the third, fifth and sixth year (tenure) reviews, the Mentor Committee Report is based primarily on evaluations of the content of publications, the narrative portions of student and peer evaluations of teaching, the nature of national and international service to the field (if applicable).

1st probationary year: There is no formal review. Emphasis is on orientation of the assistant professor and the appointment of a Mentor Committee. In the first semester, there will be an informal class visitation (advice given, no written report); in the second semester, there will be a formal class visitation (advice and evaluation, with written report). The class visitations should be coordinated by the Mentor Committee but need not be staffed only by members of that Committee. In fact, it is desired that as many Executive Committee members as possible be involved in class visitations throughout the probationary period.

2nd probationary year: The Mentor Committee's recommendation for extension, promotion, or non-retention is based on the assistant professor's brief abstract (half a page) of the research program thus far and its projected shape over the next three years; the teaching record (peer and student evaluations, syllabi, etc.); and the service record.

3rd probationary year: The Mentor Committee's recommendation for extension, promotion, or non-retention is based on review and evaluation of all research in print, in press, or accepted; grant proposals, etc.; the teaching record (peer and student evaluations, syllabi, etc.); and the service record.

4th probationary year: The Mentor Committee's recommendation for extension, promotion, or non-retention is based on the assistant professor's brief abstract (half a

page) of the research program since the third-year review and its projected shape over the next two years; the teaching record (peer and student evaluations, syllabi, etc.); and the service record.

5th probationary year: The Mentor Committee's recommendation for extension, promotion, or non-retention is based on review and evaluation of new research (in print, in press, or accepted) since the last review; all work in progress expected to be part of the promotion file in the 6th year; grant proposals, etc.; the teaching record (peer and student evaluations, syllabi, etc.); and service record.

6th probationary year and promotion review: The Mentor Committee's recommendation for promotion or non-retention is based on consideration of the candidate's statement on future research, teaching, and service plans; the evaluation of all research relevant to promotion, the teaching record (peer and student evaluations, syllabi, etc.), and service record.

7. Preparation for Promotion Review

Executive Committee Vote on Promotion or Non-Retention: No later than the assistant professor's 6th probationary year, the Executive Committee must vote on whether to recommend promotion to associate professor with tenure or to recommend non-retention. The Executive Committee has the option of endorsing, appending additional materials to, or rejecting the report of the Mentor Committee's annual report in this final year. A copy of any amended materials will be sent to the assistant professor, who has the right to respond in writing. An Executive Committee recommendation to promote requires a majority of Executive Committee members voting yes or no; abstentions do not count in the determination of the majority. The Executive Committee has the option of recommending early promotion for faculty who have met the criteria for promotion before the 6th probationary year but it is recognized that the scrutiny to which such a candidacy will be put is more strenuous than normal and the Department will advise the candidate of this reality as he/she approaches a proposal for early promotion.

Communication of Vote and Advice to Assistant Professor: The Department Chair will communicate the vote tally (including yes, no, and abstain) and further advice or evaluation of the Executive Committee in person and in writing to the assistant professor as soon as possible after the meeting at which promotion is discussed. The evaluation and advice of the Mentor Committee stands as the Executive Committee's annual letter of guidance to the assistant professor.

Recommendation of Renewal or Non-Retention to the Dean: The Department Chair communicates the recommendation of the Executive Committee on renewal or non-retention to the Dean of the College.

Recommendation of Promotion: With a majority vote in favor of promotion, the Department Chair appoints a Tenure Committee (of 2) which works with the Chair in preparing the case for promotion according to the Physical Sciences Divisional Committee Guidelines. Once the tenure packet is assembled (including outside letters – to be described below), the Executive Committee considers any amendments to it before voting again on whether or not to forward the tenure packet to the Dean of the College. If

such a recommendation is made, the Dean reviews the packet and forwards it to the Divisional Committee. The Divisional Committee reviews the case, votes, and makes its recommendation on promotion or non-retention to the Dean. The Dean makes a recommendation on promotion or non-retention to the Provost, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Chancellor. The Chancellor's recommendation goes to the Board of Regents for final approval.

Letter Requirements: The Physical Sciences Divisional Committee requires at least six letters (but ideally between 8 and 10 letters) for tenure evaluation of the candidate's stature in the field from recognized experts in the candidate's field. At least five of the letters must come from persons who have not been closely associated with the candidate, though the Department will strive for an even larger number in this "arm's length" category. Though letters from individuals such as the candidate's major professor, close postdoctoral supervisors, frequent collaborators, recipients of joint funding, or others who may have a substantial interest in the work evaluated are generally recognized to be given reduced weight by the Physical Sciences Divisional Committee, the Department also recognizes that such letters often provide helpful context within which to view the candidate's scholarly maturation and thus add to the case. Recognizing that the candidate knows more about potentially damaging individuals in his/her field of expertise than does the Tenure Committee, the Department will solicit the candidate's opinion on who should NOT be selected as a reference. This will generally be the extent of the candidate's input regarding the selection of letter writers. Upon selection, the Department must note any relationship between the letter writers and the candidate.

Selection of Outside Letter Writers: By the end of the semester prior to the intended submission of the dossier, the Mentor Committee will provide the Department Chair with a list of 10-12 names and addresses (including emails) of recognized experts in the candidate's field, determined by a thorough process of evaluation to be at arm's length to the candidate. Upon approval of the list by the Executive Committee, the Department Chair will write to potential reviewers with the goal of identifying at least 8 reviewers who will agree to evaluate the candidate's dossier. The identities and letters of outside reviewers are not made available to the assistant professor.

Candidate's Statement: At the same point in the semester before submission, the candidate should provide the Department Chair with the statement required by the Divisional Committee: "a succinct statement of his or her future research and teaching plans for approximately the next five years." This should be two pages in length.

Material Sent to Reviewers: The Divisional Committee requires that outside reviewers receive: "the candidate's current curriculum vitae, a substantial and representative sample of the candidate's work, including entire book, [or book] manuscript, if appropriate to the candidate's discipline, and the candidate's statement of future research plans." The Department will generally send the entire dossier to reviewers with instructions to focus their commentary on the three items listed above.

Access to Outside Letters: Once received by the Department, these confidential letters will be kept in the Department Administrator's office and made available to the Department Chair and members of the Executive Committee. The candidate does not have access to the outside letters. In the case of dispute, the Department Chair has the

option of summarizing the letters in such a way that the identity of the letter writers is not evident.

Bios of Outside Reviewers: For assistant professors who will be recommended to the Dean and Divisional Committee for promotion, the Tenure Committee will provide the Department Chair with a brief biography of each reviewer--listing name, affiliation, rank, major field of expertise, major publications, relationship (if any) to the candidate, and other pertinent information (1-2 paragraphs per reviewer).

8. Calendar for Annual Review without Promotion

The schedule for review will generally follow the calendar below. For assistant professors whose appointments begin in January or whose tenure clocks have been extended, an alternate schedule may be adopted.

September: Department Chair notifies Mentor Committee chairs and assistant professors of their responsibilities and deadlines for the annual review.

February Faculty Meeting: Deadline for Mentor Committee reports on assistant professors in the 2nd-5th probationary year. Discussion of each case ensues at this faculty meeting in Executive Session.

March Faculty Meeting: Acting on the Mentor Committee report, the Executive Committee votes on contract renewal or non-retention of assistant professors.

The Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences Guidelines on the Review Process are consistent with the requirements of Faculty Policy and Procedures. Campus policy on probationary faculty appointments, renewals, promotions, and non-retentions is articulated in Chapter 7 of Faculty Policy and Procedures. Chapter 8, section 15 covers faculty grievance procedures.

Approved by the Executive Committee
May 4, 2016