

University of Pittsburgh

Department of Physics and Astronomy

Tenure and Tenured Promotion: Additional Information

(draft circa Jan. 13, 2025)

1. Documentation necessary to start a promotion process

The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences provides guidelines (in the Chair's Handbook) on the documentation needed for a promotion dossier; the version circa Jan. 15, 2025, is provided below.

The department will provide the following information for candidate's tenure or tenured promotion process. Some of the information below is provided by the candidate as a part of their promotion dossier. This information will be shared with the department and external referees. The list below represents general guidelines for Promotion Dossiers.

1. Cover letter – prepared by the Chair.

2. Curriculum Vita – A complete and dated curriculum vita (CV) must be submitted and the candidate should be given the opportunity to update the information. A dated copy of the CV that was sent to external reviewers must also be included in the dossier.

A complete CV includes the following elements:

- Must be current
- Formal post-secondary education
- Professional appointments
- Publication list organized by categories
 - Books, abstracts, monographs, journal articles, chapters in edited volumes, textbooks, etc.
 - Refereed journal articles should be identified clearly
- Patents
- Conference presentations, departmental seminars, invited talks, keynotes (if reported, should be listed separately)
- Sponsored projects (if applicable). This is particularly important for candidates whose research requires the support of external grants in order to be sustained.
 - Granting agency
 - Title of award and its time period

- The amount designated as total costs and a breakdown indicating direct and indirect costs.
- Project title of the candidate (e.g., PI or co-PI)
- A list of all other PIs or Co-PIs
- Honors, awards, and fellowships
- Courses taught and number of students
- Master's and PhD students supervised with dates of graduation
 - Indicate status of each student and/or job placement
- Service on other thesis committees
- Undergraduate students supervised and research project titles
- Current and former postdoctoral scholars advised
- Collaborators
- Professionally relevant service to the department, the Dietrich School, the University, external institutions, or professional organizations
- Other indications of professional activities
 - Invited lectures presented at other institutions
 - Positions held in professional societies

For more information consult the non-exhaustive lists of possible contributions to Research, Teaching and Mentoring, and Service provided in a supplemental document.

3. List of Supervised Graduate Students – can be listed on CV or as a separate document (see guidance listed under CV for information to include)

4. Grant Support/Sponsored Projects – should be listed on CV, but can also be submitted as a separate document (see guidance listed under CV for information to include)

5. Course Enrollment Sheet – provided by the Dean's Office – added to the candidate's dossier

6. Candidate's Personal Research and Teaching Statements – The candidate for promotion must submit two statements (5-8 pages total) of their professional interests, accomplishments, goals in research, and teaching and mentoring. The research statement should include scholarly contributions and impact on future scholarship and (if applicable) also the translational/societal impact of the research/scholarship/creative activity. The research statement should be written

in language that is understandable by non-experts, because the primary audience for the statement is the ad hoc Committee, the Dean, the Provost's Advisory Council for Promotion and Tenure, the Provost, and the Chancellor. The teaching and mentoring statement should outline teaching and mentoring goals, activities and achievements.

7. Departmental Committee Report –The chair of candidate's Mentoring Committee should submit a summary report.

8. Annual Evaluations and Third Year Review Letters

- Include a copy of all annual evaluation letters received by the candidate. Make sure no salary information is included.
 - Note: If the candidate's immediate supervisor is the Dean, annual letters of evaluation written by the Dean to the candidate are confidential in nature and are thus excluded from the dossier. Examples of these types of candidates are Chairs, Directors, and Distinguished Faculty.
- Include a copy of departmental recommendations to the Dean concerning reappointment in the tenure stream for tenure cases only. (Third Year Review letter)

9. List of Submitted Publications - Reprints, preprints, and books

- At least one electronic copy of each paper, preprint, conference abstract, and/or book that is being presented as part of the candidate's scholarly work relevant to the promotion (or appointment) must be included in the dossier.
- A list of all the manuscripts/monographs submitted for publication must be included in the dossier.

10. Published Reviews of candidate's published work (if applicable)

11. Letter of Solicitation to External Referees – a template of the letter sent to external referees must be included in the dossier in Box.

12. External Referee List must include: 1) Name; 2) Title; 3) Institution; 4) Brief summary of expertise; 5) Why they were selected; 6) Mark of distinction; 7) Arm's length status; 8) By whom they were selected (candidate or department); 9) Professional links or working relationship to candidate; 10) Professional links and working relationship (if any) between the referee and the candidate should be explained.

- In a standard "External Referee List" provided with every faculty promotion case, the Department Chair should provide a very brief description of the relationship between the candidate and each external writer, including such phrases as:

- Professional acquaintance,
- Collaborator/Co-Investigator/Co-Author,
- (Former) Mentor/Advisor,
- Dissertation Committee Chair/Member
- ***All requests sent out must explain any lack of response.***
- In disciplines where it is normal practice to ask colleagues whether they will review a dossier before they are sent material, all potential referees contacted in this "initial screening" should be documented in the External Referee List.
- Note: Any additional insight for selection as an external reviewer (Editor-in-Chief, distinguished faculty in discipline, university administrator, center director, AAAS fellow, National Academies of Sciences....) should be included as a 'Mark of Distinction' on the External Referee List.
- Please use the External Referee List template provided by the Office of the Dean.

13. External letters – The selection of external referees is extremely important to the strength of a department's recommendation concerning promotion and tenure. The selection process should be objective and fair, and it should be well documented.

- Letters of external review should be solicited from scholars who are arms-length from the candidate, excluding former advisors, co-authors/co-editors, research collaborators, and current/former colleagues. When this is not possible or feasible as, for example, in a new or emerging field of study, an explanation should be provided in the dossier.
- At least six letters of recommendation from external referees are required, and in most DSAS disciplines nine to twelve letters may be required to build an effective dossier.
- The candidate should be asked to suggest several referees, and no more than half of the names chosen by the department as external referees may be taken from the list suggested by the candidate.

14. Documentation of Teaching Effectiveness – Please use the following link to access the list of teaching materials for promotion and tenure reviews in the Dietrich School: <https://www.as.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Guidelines%20for%20Evaluating%20Faculty%20Teaching%202020.pdf> This information is also added below.

If letters from students are solicited by the department, the solicitation should be systematic (e.g., all graduate students from a given course), and the anonymity of the students must be protected. Under no circumstances should the candidate solicit letters from his/her students.

15. Ballots/Faculty Vote – All promotions must be put to a vote by the departmental faculty.

- In cases of promotion to Tenure, only tenured faculty may vote.
- In cases of promotion to Professor, only Professors may vote.
- Eligible faculty members who are not able to attend a particular meeting may vote as long as they have reviewed the dossier and been informed of the deliberations of the faculty.

The individual votes must be anonymous, regardless of the format used to vote (paper vs. electronic). If the ballots are signed, it is not possible to protect the anonymity of voting, because the ballots will ultimately become part of the candidate's personnel file. Therefore, departments may wish to devise a voting system using ballots that are uniquely numbered in advance, and then a key should be sent to the Dean's Office.

16. Teaching Materials for Tenure and Promotion in the Dietrich School

At its meeting on **December 10, 2020**, the Dietrich School Council approved the following guidelines for evaluating faculty teaching:

Faculty are expected to have the students in every course they teach surveyed through the OMET system. For courses for which OMET surveying is not available, generally because the number of enrolled students is too low to maintain anonymity of responses, the faculty instructor is responsible for providing an alternative means of anonymously surveying and collecting student opinions of the course.

As teaching excellence is central to the mission of the Dietrich School, the teaching dossiers submitted in T/TS promotion and tenure cases and AS promotion cases, and which may be provided at major contract renewal times such as third year reviews, should allow a full evaluation of the quality of the candidate's teaching. The materials submitted in teaching dossiers may vary by candidate and department, but consideration should be given to including a variety of items that reflect a candidate's pedagogical goals, efforts, and outcomes such as:

From the candidate:

- A Teaching Philosophy statement;
- Documentation of professional development in pedagogy;
- Documentation of efforts to improve teaching, and the results;
- Documentation of translation of research/scholarship into course content and pedagogy;
- Documentation of out-of-the-classroom teaching and student mentoring;

- Documentation of pedagogical teaching or mentoring provided to faculty colleagues;
- Full student surveys (OMETs) for all courses in the time period under consideration.

From the department:

- Results of a focus group of students from a candidate's course(s), with the focus group organized and facilitated by someone other than the candidate or department;
- Information on student learning in the candidate's class(es);
- Rigorous peer evaluations of teaching that include peer review of syllabi and course material and, if appropriate, a classroom visit. It may be useful to have senior/junior faculty pairs or members of an appointed committee conduct these peer reviews.

Please note that the Center for Teaching and Learning may be helpful in identifying best practices for improving and evaluating teaching in your discipline. <https://teaching.pitt.edu/>

2. Dossier checklist for tenure or tenured promotion

The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences also provides a checklist (in Chair's Handbook) for the documentation needed for a promotion dossier; the version circa Jan. 15, 2025 is provided below.

- Chair's Cover Letter to Dean
- Curriculum Vitae
- List of Supervised Graduate Students
- Grant Support
- Course Enrollment/Teaching Sheet – provided by the Office of the Dean
- Candidate's Personal Statements (Research, and Teaching and Mentoring)
- Departmental (Mentoring) Committee Report
- Copies of Annual Evaluation Letters by Department Chair
- List of Submitted Publications
- Published Review(s) of candidate's written work (if applicable)
- Letter of Solicitation to External Referees
- External Referee List
- External Letters of Reference
- Documentation in support of Teaching Effectiveness
- OMET Evaluations
- Peer Evaluations of Teaching
- Syllabi and Course Materials
- Department Vote Ballots
- Ballot Tally

3. Timeline for Promotion Consideration

Below is the timeline used for promotion activities through the 2023-2024 academic year. The deadline for dossiers for promotion to Associate Professor is currently October 1, and December 2 for promotion to Full Professor; this timeline will be updated according to DSAS.

The following timeline should be followed in the calendar year when a promotion case is to be considered internally and supported by the requested information:

(1) No later than by the middle of May, the candidate should provide to the Department's Academic Operations Manager:

- CV
- Research and Teaching Statements
- 3 publications
- Names and email addresses of between 8 and 12 external referees to write letters on their behalf for promotion

(2) By the end of August (if there are any updates to the documents the candidate originally submitted), the candidate should send to the Department's Academic Operations Manager updated versions of a subset of those documents:

- CV
- Research and Teaching Statements
- 3 publications

(3) No later than by the second week of September, the candidate should provide to the Department's Academic Operations Manager:

Publications

Course Materials

(4) No later than by the second week of September (November):

- The candidate for promotion to Tenure (Professor) must present a colloquium about their research to the department. The candidate should contact the colloquium committee to schedule their promotion colloquium ahead of time.

(5) No later than by the middle of September (November):

- The mentoring committee must prepare a report and a presentation outlining how tenure (tenured promotion) criteria have been satisfied considering the candidate's contributions to Research, Teaching and Mentoring, and Service.
- The department will hold a faculty meeting to discuss the promotion case, and a vote will be conducted. Such a meeting must take place no later than during the second week of September for promotion to Tenure, and no later than during the second week of November for promotion to Professor.

(6) For promotion to Tenure, no later than by Oct. 1, for promotion to Professor no later than on Dec. 1:

- The dossier, including the chair's report, is sent to the Dean's Office

(7) Timeline for an early promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure or to Professor will be added here at a later date.

4. An example of a letter (circa 2023) sent to external referees

Below is given an example of a letter used to solicit external review of a candidate for promotion. **Note that this letter will need to be updated to reflect the criteria adopted in 2025.**

DATE

Professor XXX
University of XXX

Dear Professor XXX:

Dr. XXX, Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy is being considered for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure in this department. I am writing to ask you to comment on Dr. XXX's accomplishments and to give us your assessment of their stature as a research scholar and teacher. It would be particularly helpful if you could compare XXX with outstanding persons of comparable rank at other institutions. We are interested to know whether this candidate would be likely to achieve the rank of tenured associate professor at your institution, or at which institutions this candidate would be competitive for a tenured position.

It may be helpful for you to know that the Bylaws of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences set the criteria for the award of tenure as "... *demonstrated excellence together with the promise of continued excellence in scholarship, in whatever form that scholarship takes...*" In judging excellence in research, we place great weight on the candidate's accomplishments to date, the intellectual power and originality that are revealed by those accomplishments, and the impact that these accomplishments have had on the discipline. And for those candidates whose work is interdisciplinary, collaborative, multidisciplinary or translational in character, or whose intellectual contributions and innovation are registered in part through significant societal impact, we ask that special care be taken to establish achievement. We are, of course, keenly interested in the candidate's promise of future growth and productivity.

I have included a copy of Dr. XXX's curriculum vitae for your reference, and a package prepared by the candidate in consultation with his/her colleagues. is available by clicking this link: XXX.

If the tenured faculty of this department endorses the promotion, a recommendation will be sent to the Dean of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences who will convene an *ad hoc* Review Committee to advise the dean with regard to this case. Your letter will be included in the dossier that will be made available to the members of the tenured faculty of this department and submitted to the Dean. It will be shared with the members of the *ad hoc* Review Committee and forward it to the Provost, the Provost's Advisory Council for Promotion and Tenure, and Chancellor along with the dean's recommendation regarding this promotion.

Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor Ann E. Cudd offered each faculty member the opportunity to document the impact that the disruptions and challenges of 2020 and 2021 had on their productivity and invited them to include this documentation in their promotion and tenure re-

views. Such documentation was not required, and faculty have made different choices with regard to whether to provide it and what information to share. If included, these statements provide context for you to consider in evaluating the candidate's work. Candidates who experienced delays in or extensions to their tenure or promotion must not be held to a higher standard.

I am aware that this is a demanding request, one which takes time from your already busy schedule, and I thank you in advance for your help. We would very much appreciate hearing from you by July xx, 202x, if possible. If you have any questions, please contact me at pachair@pitt.edu. You may email your letter to me at <email>[@pitt.edu](mailto:email@pitt.edu).

Sincerely yours,

XXX, Professor and Chair
Department of Physics and Astronomy