Review Guidelines for Assistant Professors
School of Social Work
Approved by the Executive Committee on January 27, 2016

The School of Social Work follows all Faculty Policies and Procedures (FPP) and Guidelines for tenure for the Social Studies Division. The current document summarizes some of the major guidelines outlined in those documents and provides additional detail of the procedures used by the School of Social Work. For more detail of campus policies on probationary period, annual review, and granting of tenure, see Chapter 4, “The Faculty Divisions” (particularly 4.20) and Chapter 7 “Faculty Appointments” (particularly 7.14 and 7.15) of the Faculty Policies and Procedures. In particular, additional processes for appealing a non-renewal can be found in Chapter 7 and are not detailed here.

All assistant professors are mentored and evaluated throughout the probationary period, with an emphasis on providing constructive advice to maximize their chance for success. Each year, the Director of the School of Social Work (henceforth referred to as Director) assigns each assistant professor both a mentor and a two-person (minimum) Promotion and Review (P&R) committee, selected from members of the School of Social Work’s Executive Committee (EC). For joint appointments where the tenure home is the School of Social Work, one or more additional committee members may be appointed to the P&R committee from the EC of the corresponding department. For joint appointments with joint tenure homes, the two departments will decide whether to have one joint or two separate review committees.

Appointment and Responsibilities of the Mentor

At the beginning of each year, the Director appoints each assistant professor a mentor. The Director, in consultation with the assistant professor, has the option of replacing the mentor at any point. The assistant professor may also request a change in his/her mentor at any time for any reason.

The role of the mentor is to offer support, guidance, and advice on navigating the probationary period, including the expectations and procedures of the School, College, and Social Studies Divisional Committee. For example, the mentor may advise the assistant professor on the preparation of the annual CV and review materials. The mentor may offer help on grant proposals, book prospectuses, manuscripts, teaching, and other professional activities, as appropriate. The mentor also can aid in communication between the assistant professor and his or her P&R Committee, the Director of the School, and the EC. The mentor should be available for advice on the informal as well as the formal aspects of School culture, policies, and procedures. While we assign one mentor to each assistant professor, all assistant professors are encouraged to seek advice from anyone who they would like advice from, in or outside of the School.
Promotion and Review (P&R) Committee

Function. As a subcommittee of the EC, the P&R Committee assists the EC with the annual evaluation of the assistant professor’s progress toward tenure and to recommend promotion, extension, or non-renewal. This evaluation takes the form of the annual review report to the EC, which is discussed and voted on at an EC meeting.

Membership of the P&R Committee. At the beginning of each year, the Director appoints a two member (minimum) P&R Committee for each assistant professor. The Director designates one member as the “review coordinator”. Given faculty transitions, sabbaticals, and workloads, the composition of the P&R committee may change from year to year. Typically, the current mentor will not also be assigned to be the review coordinator of the P&R committee, but may be another member of the P&R committee.

For joint appointments where the tenure home is the School of Social Work, one or more additional committee members may be appointed to the P&R committee from the EC of the corresponding department. For joint appointments with joint tenure homes, the two departments will decide whether to have one joint or two separate review committees.

Responsibilities of the Promotion and Review Committee. The review coordinator assists the assistant professor in the preparation and assembly of the annual review and/or promotion materials. The review coordinator insures that a teaching observation is performed and documented each year (see details below). The other member(s) of the review committee works with the review coordinator to evaluate the progress of the assistant professor, based on the materials provided, and to write a draft of the annual review report for the EC to discuss. The review coordinator plays a role in providing feedback to the assistant professor after the EC review is complete. See more details of the process below.

Annual Review Process

Assistant professors are reviewed each year beginning in the first year. The first year is a light review meant mostly to familiarize the EC with the work and progress of the assistant professor and to provide the assistant professor with guidance and support. As of the second year of probationary service, each year a recommendation must be made by the EC to the Dean as to whether to extend the contract by one year, to promote, or to not renew the contract. Extension of the annual contract beginning in the second year 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. The reviews in the third and fifth probationary years are typically most comprehensive; however, each review from the second year forward is both summative and evaluative and results in a recommendation of renewal or nonrenewal.

The Director informs assistant professors of the date that their annual review will occur, and informs them who is on their P&R committee. Notification typically comes in the fall, with reviews conducted in the spring or late fall. But notification must be given no less than
20 days before the review, except with the agreement of the assistant professor.

The evaluative meeting of the EC is closed, except when the assistant professor requests that the meeting be open. In an open meeting, the assistant professor under consideration may attend, but does not have the right to participate in the discussion at this meeting.

Approximately eight weeks prior to the review, the assistant professor meets with the P&R review coordinator to discuss the materials the assistant professor needs to prepare for the review. With guidance from the P&R Committee, the assistant professor prepares materials related to research, teaching, and service. The P&R committee decides whether the review should include cumulative materials or materials from just the previous year. As the third and fifth years are comprehensive reviews, they usually include cumulative materials.

**The Annual Review File.** With guidance from the review coordinator, the assistant professor is responsible for providing the review coordinator with requested materials one month prior to each scheduled review. The review coordinator should make sure that all necessary information is present in the review file so that it is accessible to the P&R committee and the EC.

The contents of the Annual Review File will include:

1. An updated CV (mentor and review coordinator should counsel the assistant professor on format of CV; Divisional Committee guidelines on CV format should be followed);
2. An annual statement (4–6 pages) from the assistant professor to his or her P&R Committee outlining the year’s progress, and relevant information pertaining to current and future research, teaching, and service (a cumulative statement may be requested, particularly in years 3 and 5);
3. Peer evaluation of teaching;
4. Statistical summary sheets of student evaluations and student comment summaries;
5. Syllabi for all courses;
6. Publications;
7. 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., letters, grant proposals, book contracts, manuscripts, pedagogical materials, etc.).

The P&R Committee examines the review file and submits a draft annual review report to the EC evaluating the assistant professor’s progress. The review coordinator provides the EC members access to materials in the review file.

At each annual review, the EC has the option of endorsing or offering revisions to the P&R committee’s report. After the EC makes any revisions to the report, the report is shared with the assistant professor. The review coordinator and Director (or his/her designee) meet with the assistant professor to discuss the report. Assistant professors have the option of responding to the review and requesting that changes be made if they believe that sections of the report do not accurately reflect their record. They may respond to the evaluation in writing or may, upon request, address the executive committee regarding the evaluation.
Minor changes to the report can be made by the review coordinator and Director of the School. Substantive changes need to be reviewed by the EC.

At each review in years two through five of the probationary period, the EC votes on whether or not to recommend to the Dean of the College a one-year extension of the contract. The Director is responsible for notifying the Dean of the recommendation for extension or nonrenewal.

The assistant professor shall be notified in writing of the decision of the executive committee within five working days. The notification must further state that the faculty member will be given, upon request, the specific reason(s) for the decision in writing and a reconsideration of the decision. Following discussion of the evaluation by the executive committee, a written evaluation approved by the executive committee shall be given to the assistant professor.

Upon written request by the assistant professor, within fifteen days of the receipt of the written notice of the decision, the Director shall provide within thirty days a written statement, which has been approved by the EC, indicating its reasons for the decision.

See FPP Chapter 7 for procedures for appealing a decision for non-renewal.

**Recommendation for Promotion or Non-renewal**

No later than the first semester of the assistant professor’s sixth probationary year (or sooner, if stipulated in the original letter of offer for those who have prior experience that counts toward the probationary period), the EC must vote on recommending either non-renewal or promotion to Associate Professor with tenure.

No later than the fifth year review, the P&R committee provides the EC with a recommendation for non-renewal or a recommendation that outside letters be requested before making a final vote for non-renewal or promotion. A final vote of the EC must occur no later than the second to last semester of the sixth probationary year in order for there to be time to submit a recommendation for tenure dossier to the Divisional Committee no later than the final semester of the sixth probationary year.

An EC recommendation to promote requires a positive vote from the majority of EC members attending the meeting. EC members may attend in person, by Skype (or other video conference), or speakerphone. Abstentions do not count in the determination of the majority.

A vote for non-renewal may happen before or after external letters are acquired. A vote for promotion occurs only after external letters have been procured.

The EC has the option of recommending early promotion for faculty who have met the criteria for promotion before the sixth probationary year. A junior faculty member would not be formally recommended for early promotion without his/her consent.
Changes in the tenure clock are allowed by University policy, such as for family-related reasons or illness. A request for an adjustment of up to one year based on the birth or adoption of a child should be sent by the faculty member to the provost (with informational copies to the Director of the School 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 Director and should be made before the beginning of the sixth probationary year. Approval of requests based on factors other than childbirth or adoption must be approved by the EC, the Dean, and the University Committee before a formal action is initiated by the provost.

**Criteria for Promotion**

Tenure is based on an evaluation of the assistant professor’s record of research, teaching, and service. The EC follows all guidelines stipulated by the Social Studies Divisional Committee Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure. According to those guidelines, tenure is based on demonstrating excellence in research and in either teaching or service; in rare cases, particularly outstanding service and teaching can be the primary basis of a successful tenure case. The School of Social Work follows all the Guidelines specified in the Social Studies Divisional Committee Guidelines, but we provide an overview of our application of those guidelines below.

When evaluating the portfolio, excellence in research is defined by a coherent body of work, focused on a well-defined area or topic that is methodologically and/or theoretically rigorous and moves significantly beyond the candidate's Ph.D. dissertation. Such work must have been reviewed in refereed venues (e.g., publishers, journals) that reflect the high standards of rigor, research, theory, and methods appropriate to the candidate’s field. In exercising its judgment, the EC looks for evidence of originality, impact, independence, standing in the profession beyond the University and State, and the likelihood of continued outstanding performance and growth. In addition, there should be evidence of a significant future project or projects in at least preliminary stages of development.

Excellence in teaching is demonstrated through such evidence as a well-articulated teaching philosophy, strong peer and student evaluations, thoughtful course and curriculum development and syllabi, and other pedagogical materials that demonstrate unique contributions to the teaching mission of the School, University, or profession. All materials should demonstrate a commitment to acceptance of and respect for diversity, creating a classroom that is a safe space for expressing opinions, teaching in interactive ways, effectively utilizing technology to enhance the student learning process, insuring one’s availability to students, assigning course materials that are current or seminal works, using measures that assess student work in a fair manner, and provision of feedback that is timely and constructive and challenges students to think more deeply and critically.

The assistant professor is expected to engage in the service life of the School, University, and profession. Excellence in service is demonstrated through providing service at various levels (i.e., department, campus, community, state, national, and international). Examples contributing to demonstration of excellence in service include: choosing service that
capitalizes on the assistant’s professor’s area of expertise, selecting committees that advance the School and University’s mission, championing projects consistent with this mission, being a team player, effectively organizing to address social issues, and demonstrating commitment and skills for positive long-term effect. For those being considered for tenure based on excellence in service, leadership in service will need to be demonstrated beyond participation in service.

**Student Evaluations and Peer Observations of Classroom Teaching**

Student evaluations of classroom teaching are secured at the end of each semester for each class. This evaluation includes both quantitative assessments collected for all instructors and open-ended comments from students. Quantitative assessments are summarized in order to make comparison between similar courses and among all courses in the School. These evaluations are collected and retained by the School and are examined during annual reviews and included in tenure dossiers.

Effective December 2013, the Social Studies Divisional Committee requires that there be one peer review of teaching each year of probationary service. The review coordinator will assign a member of the EC to serve as a peer evaluator and observe the assistant professor’s teaching at least once per year. Faculty peer evaluators should contact assistant professors well in advance to arrange a mutually agreeable class period. Before the visit, the reviewer should communicate with the assistant professor to discuss the goals or learning objectives of the class meeting and how it fits into the rest of the course (e.g., what was covered last week, what is covered next, how it builds upon previous classes).

The reviewer should write a brief report on the class observation highlighting both strengths and recommendations for improvement. The reviewer should provide the draft report to the assistant professor and meet with him/her to discuss the review. The reviewer will finalize the written report and submit it to the review coordinator for inclusion in the annual review and in the personnel file.

**Preparation for Promotion Review**

The EC can vote for non-renewal without soliciting outside evaluative letters. However, if the EC decides to solicit external letters, it follows the following process:

**Letter Requirements.** The Social Studies Divisional Committee requires “5 letters of evaluation of the candidate’s abilities and accomplishments, from nationally or internationally recognized experts in the candidate’s field outside this institution.” The School ensures that the external letters are from people who are at arms length from the candidate, and the department must note any relationship between the candidate and the letter writers.

**Selection of Outside Letter Writers.** The P&R Committee will consult with the assistant professor to solicit names of possible outside reviewers and to allow the assistant professor to identify potential reviewers who would not be appropriate due to various types of conflict of interest. The Director and P&R committee also will solicit names of potential reviewers
from the EC. The P&R Committee will then provide the EC with a list of 7-10 names and addresses (including email) of recognized experts in the candidate’s field. These experts will typically be full professors at peer institutions, but occasionally a top expert in a field holds a different title and is at a program/institution that is not a peer institution. After the EC votes to approve 7-10 external reviewers, the Director of the School will write to potential reviewers to identify at least 5 reviewers who will agree to evaluate the candidate’s dossier. If there are not five reviewers from this list who agree to review, the Director will return to the EC to solicit additional names. The identities and letters of outside reviewers are not made available to the assistant professor.

**Candidate’s Statement.** The candidate should provide the Director a statement of his or her research, teaching and service to be sent to external reviewers. The candidate should consult with his/her mentor and review coordinator in preparing this statement.

**Material Sent to Reviewers.** The candidate’s current curriculum vitae, a representative sample of the candidate’s work (chosen by the candidate and the P&R committee in consultation with the Director), and the candidate’s statement of research, teaching and service will be sent to external reviewers.

**Access to Outside Letters.** Paper copies of confidential letters will be kept in the office of the Director. Electronic copies will be made available online in a secure manner and made available to members of the EC. The candidate does not have access to the outside letters. In the case of dispute, the Director has the option of summarizing the letters in such a way that the identity of the letter writers is not evident.

**Tenure Dossier Process - Overview.** After external letters have been secured, the EC votes on whether or not to recommend the assistant professor for promotion with tenure. If the vote is for non-renewal, see FPP Chapter 7 for details of the process of appeal.

After a majority vote in favor of promotion, the Director and review coordinator, in consultation with the EC, prepares the case for promotion according to the Social Studies Divisional Committee Guidelines and forwards the tenure dossier to the Dean of the College. 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-renewal to the Dean. The Dean makes a recommendation on promotion or non-renewal 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.

In preparing the tenure dossier, the Director and review coordinator work closely with the candidate to help the candidate prepare his/her statements and materials according to Social Studies Divisional Committee Guidelines.