

NSM STANDARDS FOR REAPPOINTMENT, PROMOTION AND TENURE

April 6, 2010; revised September 2010; revised June 2024

This document is a guide to the criteria and standards that the NSM Promotion and Tenure Committee will use in deciding on their recommendations to the Dean of the College of Natural Science and Mathematics regarding promotion and tenure.

Promotion and tenure at the University of Houston (UH) are awarded by the Chancellor of the University of Houston System, upon the recommendation of the President, under the authority delegated by the Board of Regents and on the basis of recommendations initiated by a department and reviewed by the College and the Provost.

Each discipline has its own criteria and expectations for scientific recognition and the committee bases its recommendations for promotions on the standards of each discipline. The College of Natural Science and Mathematics expects that a candidate seeking promotion or tenure will have demonstrated research and academic achievements at a level of excellence and recognition appropriate for a major public university.

Each department in the College will review candidates for promotion and tenure in accordance with its by-laws, the requirements described in the Faculty Handbook and the Provost's guidelines for promotion and tenure. The department P&T committee, together with the candidate and the chair, will prepare a portfolio that addresses each candidate's case for promotion and tenure. In this document, "P&T committee" refers to the committee in a department that is responsible for reviews of faculty members for promotion and tenure.

A major component of the evaluation will be the candidate's research accomplishments while employed at the University of Houston. Faculty are also expected to fulfill their academic obligations to the University of Houston in teaching and by academic and professional service to the community.

After reviewing a candidate's portfolio, the department's P&T committee and the chair of the department will make separate, independent recommendations regarding a candidate's suitability for reappointment or promotion or tenure. A written summary of their opinions, with reasons for the opinion and the results of all voting on the recommendation, must be included in the portfolio submitted to the NSM Promotion and Tenure Committee.

A candidate's portfolio must be submitted to the NSM Promotion and Tenure Committee as scheduled in the annual Provost's guidelines. It is the responsibility of the department chair to ensure that each portfolio is complete and conforms to the Provost's guidelines and the NSM standards. Noncompliant portfolios will be returned to the Department Chair without review.

1. Standards

1.1 Standards for reappointment of untenured tenure-track faculty

A. Third-Year Review of Assistant Professors

The mandatory third-year review of a tenure-track faculty member concentrates on evaluating their progress and performance. It is more extensive than the yearly departmental review.

The NSM Promotion and Tenure Committee expects that a candidate is establishing a productive research program, is participating in his/her professional community and has the resources needed to be a successful scientist in his/her field. The committee will also review a candidate's teaching and service record.

If the NSM Promotion and Tenure Committee recommends reappointment with another review before the tenure decision, specific areas of concern and reasons for further review will be provided.

If a recommendation for reappointment is made, it will state when the next review will be conducted (fourth, fifth, or sixth year). Otherwise, a one-year nonrenewable reappointment is recommended. The assessment and recommendation is forwarded to the Dean.

B. Fourth- and Fifth-Year Reviews of Assistant Professors

Fourth- and fifth-year reviews evaluate a candidate's overall achievements (and progress) since the last review. The complete portfolio should address all issues that were indicated as concerns in previous reviews. The letters from both the department and chair must be provided. They should directly address the issues of concern raised in these reviews.

The portfolios of untenured faculty members for reappointment have the same structure, range and scope as those for a tenure decision. The difference is that these portfolios do not require any external letters.

1.2 Standards for Tenure of Untenured Faculty

A. Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

The candidate's portfolio should provide convincing evidence that the candidate has developed a nationally recognized research program as evidenced by research accomplishments, publications, awards, and support. The portfolio should identify the candidate's contribution to collaborative research efforts. The portfolio should also document satisfactory teaching and constructive participation in service by the candidate. External review letters by senior researchers are especially important in this evaluation.

B. Tenure awards to Associate Professors without tenure

In addition to the standards described in the section above, the awarding of tenure to an associate professor requires a record of achievements and research success while on the tenure track at the University of Houston.

C. Tenure awards to Full Professors without Tenure

The NSM Promotion and Tenure Committee should be convinced that the candidate for tenure has sufficient stature in scientific research to warrant tenure.

1.3 Standards for Promotion to Professor with Tenure

The candidate should have achieved national and international recognition for achievements in scientific research. External review letters by senior researchers are especially important in this evaluation. The candidate should have also established a record of satisfactory teaching and service.

2. Portfolio

The following are recommendations and comments about material to be included in the portfolios of candidates for promotion and tenure.

To ensure security and confidentiality, all letters should be provided in printed form. Electronic (e-mail) correspondence must be printed and dated. Departments should not include any comments from anonymous sources (including teaching evaluations) in a portfolio.

2.1 Internal Letters

The candidate's portfolio should include the following letters:

- i. The initial letter of appointment and any documents regarding special conditions or considerations. Any letters documenting a change to the initial appointment conditions, such as an extension of the tenure clock.
- ii. All letters from previous mandatory UH reviews, reappointments and promotions.
- iii. Letter by the departmental P&T committee with a recommendation on the candidate's case for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure. The letter should include the results of any votes taken in preparing the recommendation and a description of the evaluation process. The letter should describe and evaluate the candidate's performance in research, teaching and service, with emphasis on his/her achievements while employed at the University of Houston. The letter should be objective and analytical and include comments on the candidate's impact on the department and possible weaknesses. The letter should comment on issues about the independence of a candidate's research and their contributions to group projects.
- iv. Letter by the department chair. The chair's review should be separate from, and conducted independently of, the review by the departmental committee. The letter should describe and evaluate the candidate's performance in research, teaching and service, with emphasis on their achievements while employed at the University of Houston. It may include perspectives special to the chair, including set-up, administrative and logistic issues.

University policy mandates that no extraneous letters or materials be included in the candidate's portfolio. The candidate's portfolio should not include the following types of letters:

- i. Letters from non-mandatory reviews including annual performance reviews or confidential letters from previous promotion portfolios.
- ii. Testimonials (whether solicited or unsolicited, and whether negative or positive) from current or former students, colleagues, supervisors, collaborators, peers or friends of the candidate.
- iii. Letters from persons outside of the University of Houston, except those specifically solicited by the department for this event.

2.2. External Letters

The department chair is responsible for obtaining external review letters for promotion and tenure cases. These letters are very important parts of the review. To conform with the Provost's guidelines on the number of external letters to be included in a portfolio, it is recommended that these letters be requested on a rolling basis. The NSM Promotion and Tenure Committee would like to see at least four letters from external reviewers that provide substantial discussions of the candidate's scientific achievements and qualifications for promotion or tenure.

It is imperative that the chair only request letters from external reviewers that meet all the standards listed in the P&T guidelines. In particular, the reviewers should be knowledgeable in the candidate's research area, have the rank of Professor, have national and international recognition, and be "arm's length". **The reviewer should not be a former advisor, mentor or co-employee of the candidate. They must not have had a professional collaboration with the candidate in the last two years.** The portfolio should include information about how the reviewers were selected and the reasons for selecting those reviewers.

The reviewers **suggested** by the candidate should be indicated. It is expected that there be at least two letters from reviewers not suggested by the candidate. The portfolio should include a list of all persons who were asked to write a review letter and their reply. **The identities of reviewers will be kept confidential to the extent that is legally permissible.**

A sample copy of the letter requesting the review should be included in the portfolio. Care should be taken to ensure that the request letter is appropriate for the promotion being considered and that the specific questions in the letter conform to the material in the Provost's P&T guidelines.

2.3 Candidate's statement

Each portfolio should include a short (less than 3 pages) statement from the candidate that provides an overview of his/her achievements while employed at the University of Houston. This statement should provide a context for, and may describe the significance and impact of, their research work.

It should describe the background to the included papers and may identify important contributions. It may also list external recognition and provide other material not included elsewhere in the portfolio.

2.4. Curriculum Vitae

The candidate will include a curriculum vitae (CV) that should conform to the guidelines established by the Provost. See appropriate pages in the Provost's Guidelines for these requirements. Candidates should pay particular attention to the following points (referenced according to the Provost's Guidelines):

Section E.1.a. Student Evaluations of Teaching. The candidate should compile a single summary table of evaluations for all courses taught. This table should include the course title, the year and semester, the summary of the scores received by the instructor and a summary of average scores from comparable courses within the candidate's department for that semester. The candidate should not include the original evaluation forms and, in particular, should not include copies of comments from students. The **candidate's folder** may include a selection of student comments that have been redacted to ensure student anonymity.

Section E.2.a. Scholarly/Creative Work. The CV should only include work that has been published, or has been submitted for publication. It should not include listings of work that is only "in preparation". In addition to the Provost's requirements, the candidate should indicate what research work was performed entirely while employed by the University of Houston; what was partially performed while employed by the University of Houston and what was done when employed elsewhere. Publications associated with consulting arrangements should be identified.

Section E.2.c. Representative Works. The candidate may, according to the Provost's Guidelines submit examples of representative works. When reprints, or other works are provided, we recommend that the candidate includes an introductory page explaining the scientific significance and importance of the work to the field and/or his/her research program. For joint papers, the candidate's contribution to the work should be indicated.

Sections E.2.e. and f. Other Work Products and Technical Reports. If the candidate lists technical reports or other work products, he/she should make clear whether the products are publically available or proprietary.

Sections E.2.g and h. Research Proposals and Grants. The CV should distinguish between awards that result from a competition with a selection process and those that are made without competition including contracts to provide a service, software or other product. If success rates for various classes of grant applications are known, they may be included in the listing.

The CV must list all principal investigators on awards and grants for which the candidate claims credit. For multiple investigator grants, the applicant should describe the goals of the project, the scope of the work to be performed by the candidate and the portions of the project to be performed at the University of Houston. The candidate should provide his/her percentage credit

assignment listed on the UH transmittal form. Where multiple institutions are involved, the UH contribution should be indicated. When research grants are transferred to the University of Houston, the candidate will make clear what portion of the grant was performed at the University of Houston.

Section E.2.j. Other Indicators of Scholarly Creative Work. External consulting arrangements may be described here.

3. Information for Appeals

If a candidate wishes, to appeal the NSM Promotion and Tenure Committee recommendation, he/she may provide any relevant information related to their case.