

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE PROMOTION & TENURE GUIDELINES

AY 2025-26¹

The College of Science Promotion and Tenure Guidelines are used in conjunction with the latest published guidelines in the Faculty Handbook and on the Provost's website (www.provost.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/promotion_tenure.html).

The Provost's guidelines, along with the guidelines of the college, have been written to help ensure that all candidates for promotion and/or tenure are treated equally and fairly by the committees at the department, college, and university levels, and that the procedures employed are transparent to all.

To ensure the honest discussion of promotion and/or tenure cases, all parties involved must keep the deliberations strictly confidential. As such, the content of conversations and the results of any votes [at the college, department and university level] may be discussed only with persons who have a current role in the promotion and tenure process, such as committee members or administrators.

These guidelines as well as the *COS Expectations for Promotion and Tenure* are updated and posted each June on the COS website in accordance with guidance from the Provost's Office. Appendix A of this document includes a complete timeline for tenure and promotion review at the college and departmental level.

COS Promotion and Tenure Process at the Departmental Level

Review by Committee

Individual departments must develop and publish written policies to guide their promotion and tenure review processes, including the rules governing eligibility and selection of committee members. Each academic department shall elect tenured faculty members with the rank of associate professor and above to the department's promotion and tenure committee. This committee is a standing committee in each department. Faculty members should not serve on any promotion committee evaluating a spouse or partner. It is not sufficient to leave the room while the spouse or partner is discussed. No one may serve in any capacity on the departmental committee in a year in which they are pursuing promotion.

The number of people on the committee and length of term are at the discretion of the department head. If a member of the department's promotion and tenure committee is also the department's representative to the college P&T committee, then he or she is expected to vote rather than abstain at the department level and is ineligible to vote at the college level. Individual departments must also maintain a promotion and tenure expectations document, wherein departmental performance expectations in teaching, in research, and in service and outreach, are clearly and broadly defined; this document serves as one point of reference for the departmental committee and the department head when evaluating a candidate's dossier.

¹ Changes to this document from 2024-25 are highlighted.

Department heads may convene committees and may discuss each candidate with committees as appropriate. However, committees are to discuss the merits of the candidates and frame their recommendations without heads in attendance.

The committee will review the dossier of each candidate from their department, take a formal vote, and make a written recommendation (which includes the numerical division of the vote) to the department head as to the qualifications for tenure/promotion. Voting members for promotion and tenure for tenure-track faculty must be tenured.

The voting process is administered in a manner (e.g., electronic survey) that requires each committee member to provide reasons for his/her vote, while maintaining anonymity of the voter.

Complete detail regarding information to be included in the letter from the department committee to the head/chair is described fully in the Provost's guidelines.

Review by Department Head/Chair/Director

The department head then reviews the dossier, considers the recommendation of the committee, and for cases that will go forward writes an independent recommendation letter about the candidate, addressed to the dean of the college. If this recommendation does not concur with that of the committee, the committee is so notified, and the department head's letter will specify the reasons.

Complete detail regarding information to be included in the letter from the department head, chair or school director is described fully in the Provost's guidelines.

If either the committee or the department head recommends the candidate for promotion and/or tenure, his/her dossier is forwarded to the dean's office for formal review by the College of Science Promotion and Tenure (COS P&T) Committee and the dean. If neither the department committee nor the department head recommends a candidate for promotion and/or tenure, the dossier is not sent forward to the dean except in cases of mandatory tenure evaluation.

COS Promotion and Tenure Process at the College Level

Review by COS Committee

The COS P&T Committee is a standing committee composed of at least ten tenured faculty members, one from each COS department and the School of Neuroscience, selected in accordance with the guidelines in section 3.4.4 of the Faculty Handbook, one recommended by the College of Science Faculty Association (COSFA) and up to three additional faculty members appointed by the Dean as described below. The departmental members (including School of Neuroscience) serve staggered, three-year terms, as shown by the schedule in Table 1. Appointments for completion of a vacated three-year term are made by the dean upon recommendation from the department. COSFA will conduct a college-wide nomination and election process resulting in the recommendation of two faculty members to the Dean, who will choose one from those recommended to serve a 2-year term on the committee. Faculty members should not serve on any promotion committee evaluating a spouse or partner. It is not sufficient to leave the room while the spouse or partner is discussed.

Names of departmental and COSFA representatives are due to the dean's office by the end of the first week of fall classes of the indicated year.

2026, 2029, 2032	2027, 2030, 2033	2028, 2031, 2033
Economics Neuroscience Physics	Chemistry Psychology Statistics	Biological Sciences Geosciences Mathematics

The dean may annually appoint up to three additional tenured faculty members to the committee to serve one-year terms in order to ensure sufficient expertise, diversity, and fair representation. The dean may also appoint non-voting, non-participatory observers. Department heads do not serve on the COS P&T Committee but may be contacted for additional information during the committee's deliberations (see later in this section).

The committee will select one person to serve as chair, who will be responsible for writing the committee's recommendation letters to the dean. The dean will participate in the college committee meetings as a non-voting member. The faculty member who is appointed by the provost to represent the college on the university's promotion and tenure committee is expected to attend the committee meetings as a non-voting observer.

The purposes of the review by the college committee are to verify that the recommendations for promotion and tenure are consistent with the evidence, reflecting college-wide standards, and that they consider the goals, objectives, and programmatic priorities of the college as components of the university mission.

The dean will call a meeting of the COS P&T Committee in November. At this meeting, the dean charges the committee with their responsibilities and describes the promotion and tenure process. Each committee member is then assigned one or more of the cases to prepare for presentation to the full committee during its deliberations in December. No one will be assigned to present on a case from his/her own department. Each committee member will have access to an electronic copy of all candidates' dossiers. Each member is responsible for thoroughly reviewing all the dossiers, keeping in mind that all information is confidential.

The committee will meet for two days of deliberations during December. The deliberations begin with the presentations of individual cases as assigned at the November charge meeting. The presenter is responsible for providing a summary of the accomplishments of the candidate in the areas of teaching, research, and service and outreach; the presenter is not charged to advocate for or against the promotion. Presentation format is according to a common template provided to all committee members. Presentation order will be alphabetical by candidate within ranks being considered (i.e., candidates for promotion to associate with tenure or for promotion to full professor). Presentations should not exceed five minutes.

A full committee discussion will follow each presentation. The discussion of each case centers around achievement in those areas outlined in the *COS Expectations for Promotion and Tenure* document— research, teaching, and service and outreach – and should also include the scholarly reputation of the candidate as well as professional collegiality. In addition to the COS document linked above, please also refer to the Faculty handbook, Section 3.4.4, for details. At no time are the department representatives to the committee expected to be an advocate for the candidate(s) from their own departments.

The dean's office coordinates requests to department heads for further information or clarifications as needed. The college committee may choose, on rare occasions, to invite the department head to meet with the committee on the second day of deliberations. A preliminary vote, conducted by secret ballot, will be taken and tallied during the first day of deliberations.

On the second day of deliberations, all candidates are reviewed again. Candidates with unanimous positive votes from the first day of deliberations will be briefly reviewed and any additional information or clarifications will be presented. Candidates with negative votes from the first day will receive additional discussion, and additional information and clarifications will be presented. After discussion of each candidate on the second day of deliberations, the final vote, conducted by secret ballot, will be tallied. The voting process is administered in a manner (e.g., electronic survey) that requires each committee member to provide reasons for his/her vote (particularly important for negative votes), while maintaining anonymity of the voter. These reasons can be summarized in the letter to the dean. The letter must also explain negative and ineligible votes, and non-voting observers, if any.

For both the preliminary and the final votes, a voting member of the COS College P+T Committee should recuse him/herself from voting on a case if: (i) the member has written a paper or proposal, or has had a shared financial interest as might be represented by a business venture or an externally funded grant or contract, with the candidate in the current or previous year; (ii) the member self-determines he/she has a conflict of interest. A member who is in doubt about a potential conflict of interest, actual or perceived, should confer with the Dean. Regardless of the above, all members of the committee can participate in the discussion of all cases.

Complete detail regarding information to be included in the letter from the COS committee to the Dean is described fully in the Provost's guidelines.

The work of the COS P&T committee is typically completed before the start of the winter semester break.

Review by the COS Dean

Upon completion of the committee's work, the dean will review the dossiers and will consider the recommendations of the committee in formulating her/his recommendation. Complete detail regarding information to be included in the Dean's letter is described fully in the Provost's guidelines.

Should the dean not concur with a committee recommendation, the committee is so notified.

If the recommendation is negative from both the dean and the college committee, the normal review process is concluded. The dean informs the department head of the decision, and the department head so notifies the departmental committee and the faculty member. The dean also prepares a letter informing the faculty member of the decision, including appeal options.

COS Dossier Guidelines

As with other faculty promotion processes at Virginia Tech, the format for and content within the dossier is prescribed by the Provost. Candidates and departments are referred to the Provost's webpage for the P&T Dossier Template and P&T Promotion Guidelines available there.

This section now contains only modifications of the Provost's guidelines specific to College of Science dossiers. All other information must be referenced through the Provost's posted documents.

Executive Summary

- 1) The required table for all COS dossiers is a variation of the table provided by the Provost. For COS, the categories shown in the following example table are required in the order shown (the numeric values shown here are for illustrative purposes only):

Summary of Accomplishments

	prior to VT appointment (or promotion)	since VT appointment (or promotion)	Total
External Funding: Total Amount (Direct+Indirect)	\$5,460,822	\$407,615	\$5,868,437
External Funding: Candidate Portion of Above	\$1,090,230	\$240,112	\$1,330,342
Internal Funding: Total Amount	\$130,200	\$15,100	\$145,300
Internal Funding: Candidate Portion of Above	\$65,100	\$15,100	\$80,200
Number of Grants (external, internal)	9, 1	2, 1	11, 2
Refereed Publications	18	10	28
Other Publications	5	2	7
Total Citations Received (Google Scholar)	640	351	991
Invited Keynote Presentations	11	4	15
Other External Presentations	23	11	34
PhD Students (completed, continuing)	7, 4	2, 0	9, 4
MS Students (completed, continuing)	14, 2	5, 0	19, 2
Teaching Load (#courses taught, #SCH)	16, 1713	16, 2115	32, 3828
Awards and Recognitions	3	0	3
*date of counts is XX/XX/XXXX			

NOTE: All information and counts in the Executive Summary should clearly match the information presented in the later sections of the dossier. The later sections should be organized with this in mind. It should be an easy task for those who review the dossier to understand how the candidate arrived at the counts/totals in the Executive Summary.

NOTE: The candidate and/or department head should include the date of the count.

NOTE: Additional rows may be appended to the bottom of the table at the candidate's discretion and should be chosen in a manner that best highlights the candidate's strengths and contributions. Common examples include but are not limited to:

- Undergraduate Research Students
- Postdocs Trained
- Editorial Boards
- Grant Review Panels
- Peer Review for Journals
- Average SPOT Score
- h-Index (and/or other citation measures)

NOTE: Additional columns may also be chosen to match a candidate's career trajectory (e.g. previous appointments at rank).

- 2) A secondary table must be included to provide a detailed breakdown of the candidate's publications while in the current rank. The format from the Provost's guidelines is shown below.

Publications	Lead Author		Corresponding Author		Co-author		Total	
	Prior	Since	Prior	Since	Prior	Since	Prior	Since
Books	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	2
Book chapters	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	3
Papers in refereed journals	2	7	3	5	0	2	5	14
Conference proceedings	3	4	1	4	0	3	4	11
Non-book open educational resources (OER)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other papers and reports	1	0	1	3	1	3	3	6
Total	7	14	5	12	2	10	14	36

NOTE: For COS dossiers, additional rows may be included at the bottom but before the Total row, as pertinent to the specific discipline,

NOTE: For COS dossiers, additional columns may be included to the left of the Total column as pertinent to the specific discipline.

NOTE: For COS dossiers, narrative may be included after the table providing further explanation of the numbers, e.g. if the lead author designation is not applicable to the candidate's discipline, to show shared authorship with students, etc.

External Reviewers

- 1) For COS dossiers, a minimum of five (5) external review letters are required. Department chairs are encouraged to secure commitments from six (6) external reviewers to allow for last-minute ghosting.
- 2) The candidate may submit, to the department, a list of up to six names of potential external reviewers AND a list of up to two names of professionals who should not be included as external reviewers. No persons on the second list will serve as external reviewers.
- 3) In addition to the Provost's guidelines on external reviewers, for COS there should not be more than one (1) letter from the same institution.
- 4) In addition to the Provost's guidelines on external reviewers, for COS there should be no more than three (3) reviewers from medical institutions (due to the different probationary periods used by medical centers).

- 5) For COS faculty, the contents of the external reviewer packet includes:
- The candidate's full CV.
 - A narrative from the candidate encapsulating her/his research (maximum of five pages). This narrative is different from the candidate's statement in the official dossier: it is a technical document intended for those with strong expertise in the candidate's field. The narrative should clearly present the intellectual profile of the individual.
 - Copies of five publications, with citation analyses that define the impact and direction of the research.
 - A listing of all grant support.
 - Material as deemed appropriate to help the reviewer understand the scope of the candidate's responsibilities and service to their department, profession, and Virginia Tech. This could include an overview of the candidate's teaching and service loads. Tables such as those prepared for the executive summary may be useful.
 - Since evaluators are required to evaluate cases based on the relevant expectations, departments may wish to share departmental and/or college documents describing expectations and indicators for promotion and/or tenure.

Other Evaluation Letters

- 1) If the COS faculty member's research is primarily through a team in a research center or institute, the center or institute director (or designee) should provide a letter of evaluation. This letter should be addressed to the department head. In recent years, this has been especially pertinent for COS.
- 2) For COS faculty who present significant interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary and collaborative teaching, research, outreach, or extension as part of the record, the dossier should include one evaluation letter from the director, coordinator, or leader of the interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary program. This letter should be addressed to the department head. For example, for a candidate with significant activity in the Academy of Integrated Science or the Academy of Data Science, the department should solicit a letter of evaluation from the academy director or his/her designee.

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material is required for all COS dossiers and is to be included in a separate .pdf file with bookmarks. Supplemental material is not to be included in the Table of Contents and pages do not need to be numbered. The order of the supplemental material is:

- i. Candidate's full, current CV, including *highlighted* developments (if any) occurring after solicitation of the external letters.
- ii. All other materials in the packet that external reviewers receive. Here, too, highlighted updates to reflect developments (if any) since the packet was sent out may be included.
- iii. Candidate's full "SPOT" reports for the past three years (append the pdf's). Note: Due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching, SPOT scores for the calendar year 2020 (spring, summer, and fall) are not required to be reported in any promotion dossier.

The supplemental material will be used by the college committee only and will not be passed on to the university committee.

Timeline for College of Science Promotion and Tenure, 2025-26

Due Dates are bolded and in red. All other dates are suggested timeframes for departments.

May 2025	<p>Departments determine faculty members who will be considered for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, tenure only, and Professor, as well as those who will be considered for promotion in the Research Professor ranks, during fall semester.</p> <p><i>Department Chairs discuss promotion cases with the Dean by May 31 and prior to initiating the promotion process.</i></p> <p>Department ensures that a complete dossier including teaching, research, service, and outreach accomplishments can be assembled.</p>
June 15, 2025	Notify the Dean's Office (Amber Robinson) of faculty for whom external letters will be requested.
May – June 2025	At least 5 (6 are recommended) external reviewers are identified and invited to serve. Be sure to include required verbiage in request, including verbiage limiting the use of AI.
July 1, 2025	Letters and candidates' packets, including candidates' (external packet) statements, are sent to external reviewers. Be sure to include required verbiage in letter, including verbiage limiting the use of AI.
September 14, 2025	Due date for external letters to be received.
October 2025	Departmental deliberations and vote; dossiers for candidates going forward to the college are completed.
October 24, 2025	Promotion dossiers submitted electronically to COS NAS.
November 14, 2025	COS P&T Committee Charge Meeting – Dossiers available on SharePoint to COS Promotion and Tenure Committee members.
December 5, 2025 (Friday)	COS P&T Committee – First day of deliberations (all day)
December 11, 2025 (Thursday, Reading Day)	COS P&T Committee – Second day of deliberations (all day)
January 2026	College completes the dossiers for all tenured and tenure-track candidates going forward to the University Committee.
January 24, 2026	Final dossiers submitted to the Provost's Office.
January 2026	College completes the final dossiers for all research track candidates going forward to the OVPRI.
February 1, 2026	Final dossiers submitted to the OVPRI.