

## COLLEGE OF SCIENCE PROMOTION & TENURE GUIDELINES

### AY 2021-22<sup>1</sup>

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](http://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.

#### **Departmental P&T Process**

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. 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.

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. No one may serve in any capacity on the departmental committee in a year in which they are pursuing promotion. 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.

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. The letter should address the candidate's contributions in teaching, research, service and outreach. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators should be employed to illustrate the stature and impact of the faculty member's research and scholarly work. Include assessment of performance relative to departmental expectations for a range of responsibilities related to promotion, such as involvement of undergraduates in research, completion of master's and doctoral students, external funding to support graduate research assistantships or postdoctoral associates, and so forth.

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<sup>1</sup> Changes to this document from 2020-21 are highlighted.

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. These reasons can be summarized in the letter to the department head. The letter must also explain negative, abstention, and ineligible votes, and non-voting observers, if any.

The committee's letter will carefully explain the reasons for its recommendation. In particular, if there is a split vote, the recommendation must address the differing opinions of members who support the case and those who do not. A minority letter is not usually necessary; the differing opinions can be reflected in one letter. A minority letter may be appropriate if representing a large fraction of the committee.

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.

The department head's letter should provide a detailed assessment of the candidate's performance with separate comments on accomplishments relative to expectations for research and scholarship, for teaching, and for service and outreach, describing them in the context of the department's usual assignments across these areas, and how those expectations relate to expectations in peer departments. Tables or figures should be used as appropriate to show comparisons with peers. If expectations vary among sub-disciplines within the department, this is to be accounted for.

If the faculty candidate had an expectation, but did not meet it, please explain the reason(s) for not completing the expectation. This is especially important for non-mandatory promotion and tenure cases. Example: the department expects the candidate to have chaired a doctoral student to completion, but the candidate had not. The department head may wish to highlight other evidence that might show the candidate's success in a related area.

The letter should provide the context for the faculty member's teaching accomplishments compared to others in the department, and it should provide the context for service and outreach expectations in the discipline and rank. Similarly, it should explain the expectations and contribution for publications, external funding (e.g., grants and contracts), and the role that funding plays for the faculty member's research and scholarship in the department and in peer departments nationally, evaluating the candidate accordingly. The letter should place the candidate's research and scholarship contributions in the context of major contributors at similar rank and years in the field of scholarship. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators should be employed to illustrate the stature and impact of the faculty member's research and scholarly work. The letter should additionally address performance relative to departmental expectations for a range of responsibilities related to promotion, such as involvement of undergraduates in research, completion of master's and doctoral students, external funding to support graduate research assistantships or postdoctoral associates, and so forth. Provide any updated accomplishments (i.e., funding, awards, progress of graduate students, etc.)

The department head's letter should also summarize the comments and recommendations of the external reviewers. It is especially important that the letter identify and discuss all criticisms made by external reviewers. It is not sufficient to simply disagree with a criticism; it is necessary for the department head to provide a reasoned argument about the criticisms that are raised. Similarly, disagreement with positive remarks of externals must be explained.

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.

**College P&T Process**

The COS P&T Committee is composed of 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 and one recommended by the College of Science Faculty Association (COSFA). 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.

**Table 1: COS P&T Committee: Departmental Representative Replacement Years**

<b>2019, 2022, 2025, ...</b>	<b>2020, 2023, 2026, ...</b>	<b>2021, 2024, 2027, ...</b>
Biological Sciences Geosciences Mathematics	Economics Neuroscience Physics	Chemistry Psychology Statistics

The dean may annually appoint up to three additional tenured faculty members to the committee 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 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 the three areas in which the candidate must exhibit achievement – research, teaching, and service and outreach – and should also include the scholarly reputation of the candidate. 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, abstention, 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, i.e., 2019 or 2018; (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.

The letter from the college committee must reflect the major points of discussion that occurred during the deliberations. Should the recommendation be at variance with that received from the department head, reasons for that variance should be specified. In cases with a split vote, it is also important for the letter to address the differing opinions of members who support the promotion and those who do not. Committee letters should make the case of the majority vote but should also explain the basis for any dissenting opinions. All committee members will have an opportunity to review the letter before it is finalized and included in the dossier. A minority letter is not usually

necessary; the differing opinions can be reflected in one letter. A minority letter may be appropriate if representing a large fraction of the committee.

Upon completion of the committee’s work, the dean will once again review the dossiers and will consider the recommendations of the committee in formulating her/his recommendation. If either the dean’s recommendation, or the committee’s recommendation, is positive, the dean will provide her/his recommendation in a letter addressed to the provost. The letter may bring out additional points not raised in earlier evaluations, and in cases of reversal of the committee’s recommendation will specify reasons for that reversal. 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 Documentation Guidelines**

Guidelines for preparation of the candidate dossier may be found on the Provost’s website (link appears above). Further guidance on particular aspects of the dossier is provided here.

**NOTE: The department or school committee, or another assigned faculty member, should work with the candidate to correct errors or incomplete sections. The candidate can and should receive assistance with the initial dossier preparation. The department leader may also assist.**

- The Executive Summary (section I of the dossier) should include a table summarizing the candidate’s accomplishments. 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**

	<b>While Associate</b>	<b>Before Associate</b>	<b>Total</b>
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 or 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

- The displayed table is for a candidate seeking promotion to professor. For promotion to associate professor, replace “Associate” with “Assistant” (if no activity Before Assistant, that column may be omitted).
- For candidates with time in their current rank prior to joining Virginia Tech, replace “While Associate” and “Before Associate” with “While at VT” and “Prior to VT” (similarly for candidates currently at the Assistant Professor level).

- Additional rows may be appended to the bottom of the table at the candidate's discretion. Common examples include:
  - Undergraduate Research Students
  - Postdocs Trained
  - Editorial Boards
  - Grant Review Panels
  - Peer Review for Journals
  - Keynote addresses
  - Average SPOT Score
  - h-Index (and/or other citation measures)

Other examples may be found in the Provost's guidelines. None of these potential additions is required; additional rows, if any, should be chosen in a manner that best highlights the candidate's strengths and contributions.

- A secondary table should provide a detailed breakdown of the candidate's publications while in the current rank. Here is the format:

**Publications while in current rank**

	<b>Lead/Corresponding Author</b>	<b>Co-author/editor</b>	<b>Total</b>
Books	1	0	1
Book Chapters	0	1	1
Papers in Refereed Journals	11	7	18
Refereed Conference Proceedings	0	0	0
Other Papers and Reports	1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>

- Additional rows may be appended to the secondary table (preceding the Total row) if applicable. If an additional column is pertinent to the discipline, that, too, may be added. If the Lead Author concept is not applicable to the candidate's discipline, this should be so stated.
- Following the secondary table, if desired, include a statement providing numbers of publications in the table sharing authorship with the candidate's students.
- The candidate's statement (section III of the dossier) should be concise and focused on accomplishments in research, teaching, and service and outreach. It should briefly indicate future plans in each of these areas.
  - **COVID Statement**
    - To help internal and external evaluators understand the issues that candidates for promotion and/or tenure were dealing with during COVID-19 impacted years, candidates may choose to write a faculty COVID-19 statement that highlights changes in circumstances attributable to COVID-19 that had a demonstrable negative impact on their ability to conduct research, scholarly, creative, or outreach activities and/or publish their results. Lab closures, changes in the focus of granting agencies, the cancellation of book contracts due to the closure of university or other presses, the shuttering of performance spaces – these and other kinds of professional issues should be included. This statement will be sent to external evaluators and added to the candidate's dossier. Please see Adaptations to Promotion and/or Tenure Processes Due to COVID-19 (12/3/2020) on the Provost's promotion webpages.

- All faculty who teach should have some form of teaching evaluation, including SPOT and peer evaluations, and these evaluations should be included in the promotion dossier. This includes faculty with low teaching assignments, but who teach or regularly guest lecture. 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.
- Provide at least two letters or reports from departmental or college peer reviewers since the last promotion regarding the candidate's teaching and advising effectiveness.
- Please specify the candidate's portion of funding that is current. In some cases, it may be important to address the percentage of effort the faculty member has been and will be involved with the funded work independent of funding amounts.
- The College of Science requires six (6) letters of evaluation from outside reviewers.
  - The candidate may submit, to the department, a list of up to six names of potential external reviewers.
  - The department head and/or committee independently prepares a list of potential reviewers. Please note that generating the department's list independently from the candidate's list avoids the appearance of any conflict of interest associated with the candidate's suggested reviewers.
  - The department head and/or committee uses the two lists to select the externals. At least three of the external reviewers must be from the list prepared by the department head and/or departmental committee. These three may include externals independently identified by both the department and the candidate. The dossier is to contain a table, prepared by the department head, specifying which of the two lists, or both, that each external appeared on.
  - There should not be more than one (1) letter from the same institution.
  - The candidate's Ph.D. advisor may not be an external reviewer. Likewise, reviewers who have collaborative relationships with the candidate or who were involved in the candidate's graduate or postdoctoral education, are not allowed. When possible, please avoid soliciting external reviews from the candidate's Ph.D. granting institution or from universities at which the faculty member had a prior position. No more than three reviewers may be from medical institutions (due to the different probationary periods used by medical centers).
  - If the candidate was asked to prepare a list of external reviewers and chose not to submit a list, the dossier should note this below the chart of external reviewers.
  - In the chart of external reviewers, please include all letters received. Do not include reviewers who did not submit an outside letter in the table. Provide an explanation if there are any unusual aspects to the outside reviewers.
  - Please ask each evaluator to clarify her/his relationship with the candidate.
  - If more than six letters are solicited and received, all must be included in the dossier.
- Contents of External Reviewer Packets
  - 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 in the dossier may be useful in this regard.

- Other Evaluation Letters
  - If the candidate'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 faculty working at BI or VTCRI.
  - For 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, the department should solicit a letter of evaluation from the Academy, which should be penned by the Academy director and/or her/his designee.
- Work Under Review or In progress
  - Work listed in this section can be updated but cannot be included in early parts of the dossier. For example, a paper that was under review when the dossier was first submitted may be accepted prior to sending the dossier to the college or university committees. An annotation in this section is acceptable.

Recent changes in the Provost's guidelines regarding a candidate's dossier preparation are listed here as a reminder.

- (2021-22) NOTE: The department or school committee, or another assigned faculty member, should work with the candidate to correct errors or incomplete sections. The candidate can and should receive assistance with the initial dossier preparation. The department leader may also assist.
- (2021-22) In Section II C: If the faculty candidate had an expectation, but did not meet it, please explain the reason(s) for not completing the expectation. This is especially important for non-mandatory promotion and tenure cases. Example: the department expects the candidate to have chaired a doctoral student to completion, but the candidate had not. The department head may wish to highlight other evidence that might show the candidate's success in a related area.
- (2021-22) In Section II C: Provide any updated accomplishments (i.e., funding, awards, progress of graduate students, etc.)
- (2021-22) In Section II G: If the candidate was asked to prepare a list of external reviewers and chose not to submit a list, the dossier should note this in below the chart of external reviewers.
- (2021-22) In Section II G: Please include all letters received. Do not include reviewers who did not submit an outside letter in the table. Provide an explanation if there are any unusual aspects to the outside reviewers.
- (2021-22) In Section III A: COVID Statement: To help internal and external evaluators understand the issues that candidates for promotion and/or tenure were dealing with during COVID-19 impacted years, candidates may choose to write a faculty COVID-19 statement that highlights changes in circumstances attributable to COVID-19 that had a demonstrable negative impact on their ability to conduct research, scholarly, creative, or outreach activities and/or publish their results. Lab closures, changes in the focus of granting agencies, the cancellation of book

- contracts due to the closure of university or other presses, the shuttering of performance spaces – these and other kinds of professional issues should be included. This statement will be sent to external evaluators and added to the candidate's dossier. Please see Adaptations to Promotion and/or Tenure Processes Due to COVID-19 (12/3/2020) on the Provost's promotion webpages.
- (2021-22) In Section IV: All faculty who teach should have some form of teaching evaluation, including SPOT and peer evaluations, and these evaluations should be included in the promotion dossier. This includes faculty with low teaching assignments, but who teach or regularly guest lecture.
  - (2021-22) In Section IV: 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.
  - (2021-22) In Section IV K: Provide at least two letters or reports from departmental or college peer reviewers since the last promotion regarding the candidate's teaching and advising effectiveness.
  - (2021-22) In Section V C: Please specify the candidate's portion of funding that is current. In some cases, it may be important to address the percentage of effort the faculty member has been and will be involved with the funded work independent of funding amounts.
  - (2021-22) In Section VIII: Work listed in this section can be updated but cannot be included in early parts of the dossier. For example, a paper that was under review when the dossier was first submitted may be accepted prior to sending the dossier to the college or university committees. An annotation in this section is acceptable.

### **Supplemental Material**

Supplemental material for the dossier is to be included in a separate .pdf file with bookmarks.

In most cases, supplemental material can be scanned if not already available as pdf. If there is something that cannot be scanned, please contact the dean's office. 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:

1. Candidate's full, current CV, including *highlighted* developments (if any) occurring after solicitation of the external letters.
2. 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.  
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, 2021-22

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

May 2021	<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 <b>May 31</b> 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>
<b>June 14, 2021</b>	Notify the Dean's Office (Allison Craft) of faculty for whom external letters will be requested.
May – June 2021	Six or more external reviewers are identified and invited to serve.
July 1, 2021	Letters and candidates' packets, including candidates' statements, are sent to external reviewers.
September 30, 2021	Due date for external letters to be received.
October 2021	Departmental deliberations and vote; dossiers for candidates going forward to the college are completed.
<b>October 29, 2021</b>	Promotion dossiers submitted electronically to COS NAS.
<b>November 19, 2021</b>	<b>COS P&amp;T Committee Charge Meeting</b> – Dossiers available on SharePoint to COS Promotion and Tenure Committee members.
<b>December 3, 2021 (Friday)</b>	<b>COS P&amp;T Committee</b> – First day of deliberations (all day)
<b>December 9, 2021 (Thursday, Reading Day)</b>	<b>COS P&amp;T Committee</b> – Second day of deliberations (all day)
<b>December 15, 2021</b>	Final dossiers submitted to the OVPRI.
January and February 2022	College and Departments complete the dossiers for all tenured and tenure-track candidates going forward to the University Committee.
<b>January 28, 2022</b>	Final dossiers submitted to the Provost's Office.
February 2022	College and department staff members complete the final dossiers for all research track candidates going forward to the OVPRI.