Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering
Department of Nanoscience

Procedures for Reappointment, Tenure, & Promotion

Approved by the Department Faculty, September 20, 2019

This document describes the procedures that will be followed in cases of reappointment to a second term as an Assistant Professor, tenure and promotion to Associate Professor (or tenure alone, if the initial appointment is without tenure at that rank), and promotion to Professor. These Procedures are subordinate to the UNCG Promotion, Tenure, Academic Freedom, and Due Process Regulations (hereafter “UNCG Regulations”) and to any similar school-wide document that may be adopted for JSNN in the future. Other relevant policies mentioned in this document will be found on the Provost’s web site. Not every relevant University and School policy is included in this departmental document, and faculty are responsible for understanding how those policies apply to their case.

Throughout this document “candidate” refers to a faculty member who is being, or may in the future be, considered for reappointment, tenure, or promotion.

Only approximate dates for the stages of review are given in this document. When an actual review is scheduled, the Chair will inform the candidate and the voting faculty of specific dates and deadlines.

The standards of evaluation that will be applied in cases of reappointment, tenure, or promotion are described in a separate document, the Department’s Guidelines for Reappointment, Tenure, & Promotion.

A. Review for Reappointment to a Second Term as Assistant Professor (UNCG Regulations, Sect. 3.D.ii)

The deadline for sending a reappointment recommendation to the Provost is usually in mid-January. To avoid scheduling problems during the semester break, the department will normally complete its process by early December. The Chair will provide a schedule of dates and deadlines no later than October 1.

The reappointment review includes separate written evaluations by the tenured faculty and by the department chair. The candidate writes a summary of her/his research, teaching, and service accomplishments since joining the faculty. The department Chair and a faculty mentor will assist the candidate in preparing the materials for uploading into Activity Insight. The reappointment review does not include letters from outside reviewers.
B. Review of Assistant Professors for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor
(UNCG Regulations, Sect. 3.D.ii)

Assistant Professors are reviewed for tenure and promotion during the sixth year of their appointment. The review typically begins in the spring of the fifth year, to allow time for the preparation of materials and the identification of external reviewers. The department Chair will review the process with candidates and provide specific dates and deadlines early in the spring semester.

Extensions of the probationary period (“stopping the tenure clock”) – UNCG Regulations, Sect. 3.C.i-iii. Other relevant policies are “Policy on Extended Illness, Disability, and Family Leave for Faculty” and “Personal Exigency: Guidelines & Procedures” on Provost’s website. If a faculty member wishes to request an extension to the probationary period, s/he must consult with the Chair to discuss the situation well in advance of the time when the review will be initiated. If the candidate has been granted a leave under the Policy on Extended Illness, Disability, and Family Leave for Faculty, then the letter granting the leave will specify whether or not an extension is also granted. A request for an extension based on personal exigency must be made in writing to the Chair, who will forward it with a recommendation to the Dean for communication to the Provost.

Early decisions on tenure and promotion. If an agreement for early tenure review was made at the time of hire, the letter documenting the agreement will specify when the tenure review must take place. An early review is also permitted, even if no agreement was made at the time of hire, if the tenured faculty or the Chair believe that early tenure is warranted by the candidate’s accomplishments. In such cases, the Chair will discuss that possibility with the Dean before proceeding.

Full reviews for tenure are required in all cases. Every candidate for tenure has the right to a full review at the department, School, and University levels. A candidate who decides not to apply for tenure must inform the department Chair in writing. In all other cases, the department must obtain external letters of evaluation and submit the dossier for review at the School and University levels, even in the case of a negative vote by the faculty and a negative recommendation by the Chair.

C. Review for Tenure of Associate Professors Hired without Tenure

Although faculty hired from outside UNCG at the rank of Associate Professor are normally granted tenure at the time of hire, it is possible for the hire to be without tenure (UNCG Regulations, Sect. 3.E.ii). In that case, the letter of appointment will specify the date by which the tenure review must be conducted. The review procedure will follow that for tenure and promotion of Assistant Professors.

When the candidate is being reviewed, the department may recommend either tenure at that rank, or tenure with promotion to Professor. The department is not required to conduct a review for promotion as well as for tenure in such cases, but must
do so if either a majority of the Professors or the department Chair decides it is appropriate. In such cases two separate votes must be taken, one on the question of tenure and one on the question of promotion, since the Professors (and the Chair) may hold different opinions on those two actions. It is possible for reviewers at the School or University level to endorse the recommendation for tenure but not that for promotion.

**D. Review of Associate Professors for Promotion to Professor** (UNCG Regulations, Sect. 3.E.iii.)

Recommendations for promotion to Professor originate with the department Chair or with a majority of the Professors. An Associate Professor may be reviewed for promotion at any time (there is no minimum time-in-rank requirement) and an Associate Professor also has the right to a full review for promotion at specified intervals (UNCG Regulations, Section 3.E.iii.b and c).

A decision to solicit outside letters for a candidate for promotion to Professor commits the department to submit the dossier for a full review at the School and University levels, even if the department’s recommendation is negative, unless the candidate requests in writing to the Chair that the application be withdrawn. A request to withdraw the application will not prejudice a subsequent review for promotion in any way.

**E. Preparation of Promotion and Tenure Dossiers for Review**

*External review letters*

External review letters are required of all candidates for tenure or promotion and will be requested in the spring semester prior to the scheduled review year so as to allow for delays in getting agreements from reviewers and in receiving the letters. The usual number of external letters is three, although it may be advisable to get more in particular cases. It is a good idea to request letters from at least one more person than the number of letters needed, since reviewers do sometimes fail to come through by the deadline.

The candidate will prepare a description of his or her program of research to be provided to the reviewers on a secure site (Box), together with a vita and copies of selected publications. The selection of reviewers must follow the requirements of the UNCG Regulations, Section 4.B.i.c.

*Qualifications of reviewers.* The reviewers who are selected must exclude anyone who there is reason to believe could not provide an objective review of the candidate (e.g., previous mentors or supervisors or close collaborators). The candidate should provide the chair with a list of such individuals so that they are not contacted inadvertently. It is not necessary for the candidate and the reviewers to be completely unknown to one another. The most important thing is to ensure that the reviewers are objective and have the necessary professional credentials to provide an authoritative assessment of the candidate’s work. Each reviewer will be asked to describe his or her acquaintance with the candidate (if any) in the letter so that readers of the dossier can
make their own evaluation of the reviewers’ objectivity. If any reviewer has had significant prior contacts with the candidate, the Chair will include in the dossier an explanation of why that person was nonetheless chosen to write a letter.

Most, if not all, of the external reviewers should be at or above the rank to which the candidate is seeking promotion and should hold academic positions at respected institutions. In some cases reviewers in non-academic positions may also be needed to provide a full evaluation a candidate’s work, for example when the commercialization of research is a significant part of the candidate’s record.

Applied or community-engaged work. When the candidate’s record includes a significant amount of applied or community-engaged work, the dossier will include evidence of its impact, whether local, regional, national, or international. This evidence may include letters from people able to assess its impact and such individuals will often be non-academics. In addition, they may be asked to assess the impact of single projects rather than evaluating the candidate’s overall record. Additional evidence may include news coverage, recommendations or actions by agencies or organizations on the basis of the candidate’s work, invitations to the candidate to participate in forums such as advisory bodies or working groups, and so forth.

Non-evaluative letters. In some cases, it may be appropriate to request additional letters to explain aspects of a candidate’s work rather than to evaluate it. For example, if a significant number of publications derive from a long-term collaboration with another researcher, it might be useful to include a letter from the collaborator describing the candidate’s role in the research program. When requesting letters of that type, it is important to emphasize that the writer is being asked for a description or explanation, not an evaluation. Such letters should be clearly distinguished from letters of evaluation and their role in the dossier explained.

External letters cannot be confidential. The Chair’s letter to potential reviewers will state clearly that external letters cannot be kept confidential from the candidate. UNC system policy and NC State law both require that faculty have access to any materials in their personnel file, including external review letters. (See Appendix A)

F. Assembling the Promotion & Tenure Dossier

Dossiers are assembled and reviewed online in Activity Insight, using the format provided. Only the department’s executive assistant will upload material to avoid confusion about what are the final versions of various documents and to prevent unauthorized changes being made to the dossier. Authority to read each dossier will be given to the candidate, the Chair, and the appropriate voting faculty.

Part A: Summary of Work Accomplished.

This is prepared by the candidate, with assistance and advice from the department Chair and, if requested, other senior members of the faculty. It is important that the preparation exactly follow the instructions provided. The Chair will establish a deadline for completing this part of the dossier, typically in late August.
The List of Accomplishments in Part A may include research that preceded the period under review, but it is important to distinguish any earlier work from that completed within the review period. In the case of research that was begun but not completed before the start of the review period, details should be provided. For example: “Data for this paper were collected before appointment at UNCG and the analysis and writing of the manuscript completed after appointment.”

**Part B: Department.**

This part is prepared by the department Chair following the instructions provided on Activity Insight, with assistance from members of the voting faculty if necessary.

**Statement of Context.** In addition to the information specified, the following will be included here:

- If the department changed its expectations for tenure or promotion during the period under review, the evaluation will explain how the candidate’s work was evaluated according to the different standards.

- If a candidate for tenure has been granted an extension to the probationary period for any reason, that fact will be noted in the Statement of Context.

**Late inclusion of material in the dossier – UNCG Regulations, Sect. 4.B.g.(2).** Certain items may be added to the dossier after the deadline established for its completion. In general, these are limited to: notice of acceptance of manuscripts listed as “under review”; notice of award of grants listed as submitted; unanticipated awards or honors. The Chair will send any such information to the Dean, who will determine whether it can be included.

**G. Voting eligibility of Department faculty**

Only tenured faculty may participate in decisions involving reappointment, tenure, or promotion, as follows:

- On decisions to recommend an Assistant Professor for reappointment or for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor – all tenured faculty at the rank of Associate Professor or above.

- On decisions to recommend an untenured Associate Professor for tenure – all tenured Professors.

- On decisions to recommend an Associate Professor for promotion to Professor – all tenured Professors.

If the department has too few faculty of appropriate rank to prepare a recommendation for promotion, the Dean will consult with the Chair and with the senior department faculty and will appoint an ad hoc committee of at least three faculty to review the case and prepare the dossier (UNCG Regulations, Sect. 4.B.i.f.). The Chair will advise the Dean of the need to make this appointment by January 31 of the
calendar year in which the review will begin, or as soon thereafter as the need is recognized.

Adjacent faculty are not eligible to vote on tenure or promotion cases. Faculty on phased retirement give up tenure and so are not eligible to vote on any tenure or promotion cases. If any member of the tenured faculty holds a joint (not adjunct) appointment, the document that established the appointment determines that individual’s voting rights.

In cases where two spouses or domestic partners hold positions in the department, they may not participate in or be present at discussions or decisions about each other’s tenure or promotion (or any other personnel matters).

Faculty must be present at the meeting in order to vote although participation by telephone or videoconference may be arranged with the written permission of the Dean. Such an arrangement may be made, for example, for a faculty member who is on leave. Absentee and proxy ballots are not permitted.

H. Evaluation of the Dossier by the Faculty and the Vote on a Recommendation

The following procedure will be followed (UNCG Regulations, Sect. 4.B.i.a.):

1. Well before the meeting at which the vote is taken, each of the main sections of the candidate’s dossier (normally teaching, research, and service) will be assigned to a voting member of the faculty. These individuals will be selected by the voting faculty (since the faculty’s evaluation must be independent of the department Chair’s), but the Chair will ensure that the assignments are made and completed in a timely manner.

2. Each person will prepare a summary evaluation of their assigned section in draft form, identifying both the strengths and weaknesses of the case. The department Chair will ensure that the summary evaluations, together with all of the material to be included in the dossier, are loaded into Activity Insight for the voting faculty to read well in advance of the meeting.

3. During the meeting, the entire dossier will be available in Activity Insight for the faculty to consult so that any disagreements over its contents can be resolved. If any last-minute additions need to be recognized (for example, acceptance of a paper or award of a grant) these will be provided during the evidence-gathering phase. The department Chair leaves the meeting before the faculty begin their deliberations.

4. During the meeting, faculty may propose changes to the written evaluations and those endorsed by a majority of the faculty will be included in the final version.

5. When the deliberations are concluded, the elected chair calls for a vote by secret ballot and ensures that all faculty who voted sign the Signature Sheet which is then delivered to the department Chair for inclusion in the dossier.
6. It is the elected chair’s responsibility to report the faculty’s vote to the department Chair and to prepare a summary of the discussion, including the opinions pro and con that were arrived at as a result of the deliberations. This does not mean that the summary must mention every comment or opinion expressed in the course of the meeting. Views may change during the discussion but the report must include adequate representation of the opinions on which the final vote was based.

7. The committee chair will distribute the summary to the faculty for comment and possible correction before providing the final version for inclusion in the dossier.

8. Faculty who voted with the minority on a tenure or promotion case may prepare a dissenting opinion, but are not required to do so (UNCG Regulations, Sect. 4.B.i.h.). The department Chair will establish a deadline for the receipt of a dissenting opinion, which must be included in the dossier without alteration. Any dissenting opinion must be signed by the faculty member(s) who wrote it.

*The department Chair’s independent evaluation*

All materials, except for any comments written by the candidate (see below), will be available for the department Chair to write his/her independent evaluation, which may agree or disagree with the faculty’s evaluation.

*Comments by the candidate*

After the dossier (including outside letters, the faculty’s evaluation, the chair’s evaluation, and any dissenting opinions) is completed but before it leaves the control of the department, the candidate must sign a statement confirming that s/he has reviewed all the material included in it. The candidate may also, but need not, write a brief statement commenting on the dossier or on opinions expressed in it. This statement is not the place to include new evidence or information. It provides an opportunity to draw attention to points that the candidate believes have been overlooked or given inappropriate emphasis, to rebut negative evaluations, or to correct errors of fact.
Appendix A – Sample Letter Requesting External Review. This letter is normally sent after an informal contact by the Chair to ascertain the person’s willingness to serve as a reviewer, agreement with the deadline, and determination that there is no conflict of interest.

Dear [Name]:

Thank you for agreeing to provide an evaluation to assist in our review of [candidate’s name] for [tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, or other action being contemplated]. University regulations require that every candidate for tenure or promotion be externally reviewed regardless of the Department’s assessment of the merits of the case and that all cases, whether or not supported at the department level, be sent forward for review by the School and University. I have enclosed a copy of the Department of Nanoscience’s Guidelines on Tenure and Promotion and ask that you provide your evaluation in relation to the expectations described in that document. You may also consult the University promotion and tenure documents at the following location: [URL]

We would appreciate your candid assessment of the candidate’s qualifications and any other information you can provide that will help us in making a wise decision. We are especially interested in your assessment of the quality and significance of the candidate’s professional publications [and/or other accomplishments being evaluated], record of external funding, and his/her national reputation and relative standing in the field. You will be provided with access to a secure website that includes [candidate’s] vita, a description of his/her program of research/creative activity, and a representative sample of his/her work. I will be glad to provide you with additional material on request. I need to receive your review no later than [date]. If you anticipate any problems in meeting this deadline, please let me know as soon as possible.

If you have had any previous associations with [candidate’s name], we ask that you describe them in your letter. Such associations will not preclude your serving as a reviewer, unless you believe that they may impair your objectivity.

Please note that State law and University regulations require that candidates be given the opportunity to review all the materials in their dossier, including unredacted outside letters of evaluation, before it is sent forward from the department.

Thank you again for your assistance with this important task.

Sincerely,