

College of Arts and Sciences
Instructions for Preparing Personnel Recommendation Form and Portfolio

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Review ALL Relevant University, College, and Department Guidelines

Before developing a dossier for reappointment, promotion, or tenure, please review both the *University Guidelines on Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure* and the *College of Arts and Sciences Guidelines on Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (College Guidelines)*. In addition, review any procedures or guidelines developed by your department.

For reappointments beyond the first year, it is important to read the recommendations that have been made previously by the Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) Committee and the Dean. The intent of the review process is frustrated if these prior reviews are ignored. The Dean and the RPT Committee refer to prior years' reviews and look for responses to their comments or suggestions.

Candidate's Presentation of Materials

The Dean's office provides all candidates for reappointment, promotion, or tenure with an RPT Binder. The binder has two parts. Inside the front cover, place the Personnel Recommendation Form and the other documents that will be forwarded to Academic Affairs: the workload summary (a one-page summary of assignments for the past ten semesters), external evaluations of research contributions (strongly recommended for applications for promotion to Associate Professor or Professor with a ranking of Distinguished in research), and/or letters from chairs of interdisciplinary programs (optional for any candidate with an appointment in an interdisciplinary program).

All other materials should be placed in the three-ring section. The binders make it possible for reviewers to examine the dossier without creating disarray. Place a Table of Contents at the beginning of each section (Teaching, Research, Service) to show how the material is organized.

The Personnel Recommendation Form is required of all candidates for reappointment, promotion, or tenure university-wide. While it can reference supporting materials provided in the dossier, it should be able to stand alone as supporting evidence for the personnel action sought. The candidate must complete the three sections of this form documenting teaching, research, and service accomplishments. Suggestions for each of these sections follow.

If you are unsure whether an activity is most appropriately categorized as "research," "teaching," or "service," consult the College Guidelines or ask your chair. Under no circumstances should an activity appear in more than one category.

A candidate who has accumulated time toward tenure at a previous institution should include accomplishments from that experience. In some cases, information such as teaching evaluations will have to be translated to relate them to UNO standards.

Documentation of Teaching

Course evaluations by students are only one form of data used to demonstrate teaching accomplishments. However, these data are *required* and should be summarized in a tabular format, using the template provided on the College of Arts and Sciences website. In addition to the quantitative data, please provide a brief narrative outlining your self-evaluation of teaching-related goals and accomplishments.

For details as to additional information that might be submitted in support of teaching accomplishments, please see Section II.B.5 of the College Guidelines.

Supporting materials to be included in the binder:

- Copies of the printouts of the mean scores for each course
- A syllabus for each **new** course, preferably the master syllabus approved by the Educational Policy Committee
- Artifacts representing students' accomplishments, especially projects that have been published or otherwise won outside recognition.
- Reprints of any publications counted in the Teaching category
- The acceptance letter and, if available, the UNO Internal Budget Form for any grant counted in the Teaching category
- During the first two years at UNO, a summary of teaching evaluations from other institutions.

Documentation of Research and Creative Activity

Complete the Research Matrix detailing publications, including journal ratings, share of contribution, and whether the publication is based on the dissertation.

It is the chair's responsibility to rate the journals in which research is published and to explain the criteria used in the rating. Consistency and credibility are important in persuading evaluators of the rating system's validity. Citation rates are particularly compelling data. Each chair will submit a statement at the beginning of the academic year stating their rationale for ranking journals from 1 to 5 in the RPT files. These statements will be kept in an electronic file in the College of Arts and Sciences and made available in a paper document each year to members of the RPT Committee, the Dean, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, and anyone else who needs to view them. Candidates for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure should be familiar with these rationales and have an understanding of the ratings of the journals in which they have published or plan to publish. If you disagree with the rationale or the rating of a specific journal, address this matter in a response to the chair's recommendation.

In addition to the list of publications, present a brief self-analysis of your scholarly program. In discussing research, it is important to remember that evaluators outside the department are not expert in your discipline; this analysis should be written in a manner that informs the educated layman regarding the scope, quality, and significance of the work.

For details regarding criteria for evaluating research, please see Section II.B.6 of the College Guidelines.

Supporting materials to be included in the binder:

- For each published article, book chapter, or review, a full reprint, preferably with the author's affiliations. (Candidates who have published more than ten journal articles during the period under review may opt to include just the first page of each provided it contains the abstract.)
- For articles or reviews accepted but not yet published, a letter of acceptance or electronic communication from the journal editor and a copy of the manuscript.
- For published books, a copy of the copyright page, title page, and a sample chapter.
- For books accepted but not yet in print, a contract or a letter of acceptance from the publisher and a manuscript of a sample chapter.
- For funded grants, a copy of the UNO Internal Budget Form. If that form has not yet been created, substitute a letter from the granting institution that specifies the project title, principal investigator, and amount of the grant.
- For unfunded grants, a manuscript of the proposal.

Documentation of Service

Professional service activities include administrative and consulting work performed for professional organizations or other agencies. If you have served your profession by reviewing book or article manuscripts, please indicate how many manuscripts you reviewed.

University service includes such activities as serving on department, college, or university committees, Faculty Senate, special commissions, and the like. Do not include teaching-related activities such as student advising, thesis advising, and course development; these belong in the teaching section.

Community activities which involve the professional expertise of the candidate should be included as service. Activities related to sports, churches, the arts, and service organizations generally are not to be included unless they relate very directly to the candidate's academic expertise.

A narrative should describe objectively the demands and fulfillment of service activities. For more details regarding documentation of service activities, see Section 11.B.7 of the College Guidelines.

Supporting materials to be included in the binder:

- Letters from professional organizations acknowledging service contributions
- Letters from community organizations acknowledging service contributions

Departmental Evaluation

A tenure-track faculty member must be rated in teaching, research, and service every year. It is sometimes difficult for departments to maintain consistency in rating candidates from year to year. Departments want to encourage a new faculty member but also to intensify their scrutiny of candidates' actual achievement as the tenure decision approaches. In the interest of fairness to candidates and clarity of communication among all parties involved (e.g., succeeding chairpersons, the RPT Committee, and the Dean), we recommend that the formal rating refer consistently to actual achievement in each category.

The guidelines specify that the ratings will be “commensurate with the rank being recommended.” In rating an assistant professor for reappointment, the standard should be the qualities of an associate professor regardless of the period before the tenure decision. Thus it is unlikely that a candidate in his or her second or third year would be rated Distinguished.

The same guidelines apply in rating performance for promotion to full professor. A rating of Proficient or Distinguished must be commensurate with the higher rank. See Section II.B.9 of the College Guidelines for a description of the additional level of accomplishment expected for promotion to professor.

The candidate must be allowed to review and, if desired, respond to the recommendation made by the departmental committee prior to its being reviewed by the chair.

Chair’s Evaluation

Writing personnel recommendations is an important responsibility of a department chair. Faculty members’ futures are at stake as are the reputations of the department and the college. While the record of professional achievement presented by the candidate is the foundation of the recommendation, a well-presented case can assure that a candidate’s accomplishments and potential are properly appreciated and evaluated.

To be effective, the chair’s recommendation should present the following:

- a clear and detailed basis for each rating, with reference to salient department, college, and university criteria and evidence in the dossier;
- explanation of any disagreement between the personnel committee’s recommendation and the chair’s;
- the trend of the candidate’s progress toward tenure;
- commentary on how the candidate fits into and contributes to the department.

In sum, the chair’s statement should be clear and well documented. A chair’s recommendation that is well stated and supported by data enhances the opportunity for the candidate to be evaluated fairly by the RPT Committee and the Dean. The length of the recommendation is not critical, but one single-spaced page is about average.

The chair’s recommendation is the appropriate place for encouragement. Interpretation such as “potentially Proficient,” “impressive considering Dr. New has been teaching for only two years,” or “making progress toward Distinguished by the tenure decision,” for example, may be used in the chair’s recommendation.

In addition to the recommendation, the chair should provide a one-page workload summary identifying the hours the candidate was assigned to teaching, research, and service for each of the past ten semesters at UNO.

If the candidate requests evaluative letters from interdisciplinary program chairs (Environmental Studies, Women’s and Gender Studies, etc.), these should be placed inside of the front cover of the binder. The letters should specifically deal with the candidate’s contributions to the interdisciplinary program in the areas of teaching, research, and service.

The candidate must be allowed to review and, if desired, respond to the chair’s recommendation prior to its submission to the College.

College Review

Materials submitted to the College will be reviewed by the RPT Committee, which will make a recommendation to the Dean. *The candidate must review and, if desired, respond to the RPT Committee's recommendation before it is received by the Dean.*

After receiving the RPT Committee's recommendation, the Dean will provide his or her recommendation and a supporting narrative. *The candidate must review and, if desired, respond to this recommendation prior to its being forwarded to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs.*

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q. What goes inside the front cover of the binder?

A. This is the spot for material that will be forwarded to Academic and Student Affairs. The most crucial document is the Personnel Recommendation Form. The workload summary should also appear in the front, as should external letters evaluating research (strongly recommended for candidates for tenure or promotion seeking a Distinguished ranking in research) and, when relevant, letters from chairs of interdisciplinary programs such as Environmental Studies or Women's and Gender Studies.

(Note: The CV will be forwarded to Academic and Student Affairs as well. But please place it in the binder, behind the first tab.)

2. Q. Can the chair indicate that a rating is between one term and the next, for example, better than "Competent" but not quite "Proficient"?

A. Not on the rating sheet. On the rating sheet, the chair should clearly mark one rating for teaching, one for research, and one for service. If it seems important to say that a candidate is heading toward a higher (or lower) rating, the chair can note the trend in his or her recommendation.

3. Q. Do publications about teaching count as "teaching" or "research"?

A. If a publication about teaching describes your own class, you can count it in the teaching section; such publications are understood to be evidence of committed and reflective teaching.

A candidate who prefers to present publications about teaching as evidence of research productivity may list them in the research section of the Personnel Recommendation Form. Reviewers recognize such publications as research when they are based on a systematic collection and analysis of data; when the study is informed by and advances current pedagogical theory; when the faculty member is in a field where pedagogy is the subject of scholarly inquiry; and/or when the work is published in a highly reputable journal. If you believe your work is research but it does not have these characteristics, or if the characteristics may not be evident to people outside your field, write a brief explanation.

4. Q. Should the record of student evaluations include evaluations from classes I taught prior to my arrival at UNO?

A. During your first two years at UNO, you won't have enough UNO data to give a clear picture of how students respond to your teaching. So if you have taught elsewhere, include a summary of your evaluations there. By your third year, you can omit those data, relying on your teaching record at UNO. When you are evaluated for tenure, reviewers will focus on your accomplishments at UNO.
5. Q. Should the list of publications include articles published prior to my arrival at UNO?

A. Yes, provide a cumulative record of your publications. But be aware that when you are evaluated for tenure, reviewers will focus on your accomplishments during your years as an assistant professor. For most candidates, that means the six-year pre-tenure period at UNO. For candidates whose tenure clock is adjusted because of a prior tenure-line appointment, material published during that appointment will count.
6. Q. If an activity fits into more than one category – for example, if it seems to be teaching because it involves instruction but seems to be service because it addresses a departmental need – can I mention it in both sections of the Personnel Recommendation Form?

A. No. Mention each activity or accomplishment in only one place.
7. Q. Should I list the letters of recommendation that I have written for students?

A. No. Writing letters of recommendation, holding office hours, attending department meetings – these are the everyday activities of the professoriate. It is understood that you perform these tasks; there is no need to mention them in your RPT dossier.
8. Q. How many syllabi and student artifacts should I include in the binder?

A. Especially if you seek a rating of Proficient or Distinguished in teaching, you will want reviewers to see evidence of your and your students' accomplishments, so include syllabi for courses you have created from scratch and student projects that have been published or otherwise won outside recognition. Be selective. Do not include syllabi for every class you have taught, marked student papers that show how hard you work, or Christmas cards from students thanking you for a great class. If you include too many materials, the really impressive ones are buried (and reviewers lose patience).
9. Q. Is it true that if I include students' comments on evaluation forms, I have to include all the comments from that class?

A. Yes. If you choose to include student comments or are required to do so by your department's guidelines, include all the comments from the class. Especially if the number of comments is small, add a note indicating that this is indeed a complete set.
10. Q. How many publications do I need for a rating of Proficient or Distinguished in research?

A. Many pre-tenure faculty members would like an unambiguous answer to this

question, but the only honest answer is that it depends. It depends upon the discipline (normal publication rates vary widely), the portion of your workload assigned to research, the quality of your publications, their length, and the percentage of each publication that you claim as your work. One purpose of the RPT process is to keep you informed about whether you are on track to achieve tenurable ratings; pay attention to your chair's recommendation and to comments from the RPT Committee and the Dean.