

<sup>1</sup>College of Education  
Oklahoma State University

**Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Guidelines**

**(Approved by COE Faculty November 21, 2014)**

**I. PREAMBLE**

Awarding reappointment, promotion, and tenure is an immensely important decision; both for the faculty member and for the long-term academic quality of the College of Education (COE) and Oklahoma State University (OSU). The processes for reappointment, promotion and tenure must be fair, rigorous and discipline-appropriate if the COE and the university are to attract, retain and recognize excellent faculty. In considering reappointment, promotion, and tenure, the COE seeks to apply the highest standards with respect to professional achievement in the areas of teaching/instruction, research/creative work, and outreach/extension/service. Academic reappointment, promotion and tenure are awarded to faculty members making continuing contributions in these three areas. While each reappointment, promotion and tenure decision is evaluated on its own merits, similar academic School standards and procedures apply to all COE faculty.

The COE has a responsibility to employ well-prepared and experienced faculty, and to assist them in developing their talents by promoting a community of professional scholars. Further, the COE has a responsibility to sustain an educational environment that protects the rights of faculty, supports academic freedom, and assures a due process uniformly across all COE Schools. The preservation of academic quality requires that all faculty members recommended for reappointment, promotion, and tenure, clearly satisfy the general guidelines for due process stated here, as well as the specific guidelines stated in each School RPT document.

**II. UNIVERSITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) Guidelines of the COE function to advance the overall mission of the university (See OSU Policy and Procedures 2-0110). The COE guidelines in regard to reappointment, promotion, and tenure must be subordinate to and congruent with the existing OSU policies and procedures related to faculty reappointment,

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<sup>1</sup>The terms research/creative work are used interchangeably throughout this document and are defined more specifically within each school. The terms teaching and instruction are used interchangeably throughout this document and are defined more specifically within each school.

promotion, and tenure. These policies and procedures include OSU Policy and Procedures 2-0902 and those found in the OSU Faculty Handbook, such as 1.3.10 regarding “Extensions of Appointment and Probationary Periods.”

All faculty members pursuing tenure and promotion are expected to define how their teaching/instruction, scholarly research/creative work, and outreach/extension/service accomplishments align with the COE and university missions and priorities. Given the importance of the university, COE and school RPT guidelines, all faculty candidates must become knowledgeable of these documents so their applications for reappointment, promotion, and tenure are decisively reviewed and recommended within the parameters of these guidelines.

Therefore, the purpose of this document is to set forth faculty guidelines for reappointment, promotion, and tenure in the COE at OSU. The COE RPT guidelines are intended to achieve the following:

1. Comply with OSU requirements that each school has its own reappointment, promotion and tenure policy;
2. Provide clear and precise guidelines that are readily available to all COE faculty;
3. Assure that procedures for the reappointment, tenure and/or promotion have been carried out in a fair and equitable manner for all COE faculty candidates.

### **III. COE PROFESSORIAL RANKS**

Each COE School may have requirements defined for each professorial rank that exceed those of the COE and OSU. Regardless, the COE definitions for each professorial rank are as follows:

#### **Beginning Assistant Professor**

A newly-hired faculty member entering the profession focuses on developing solid career aspirations and a course for personal attainment of these established academic goals. Most COE faculty members receive a reduced teaching load during their first two years to provide the opportunity to develop a strong research agenda and to focus on their teaching responsibility. While important, professional service contributions receive less emphasis as scholarship and teaching competencies are established by the beginning Assistant Professor.

#### **Continuing Assistant Professor**

Continuing Assistant Professors (post-reappointment) demonstrate a capacity to publish refereed research, seek external funds to support their scholarship, and establish and build networks - including professional presentations at state/regional/national/international conferences and various levels of interdisciplinary collaboration with their peer scholars. Effective teaching and attention to evaluative feedback to improve their teaching competencies is evident. Increased participation in program/school/college/university committee work is expected as well.

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**Associate Professor**

Evidence of emerging stature as a national or international authority within their academic discipline is part of the Associate Professors' record. The role of the COE Associate Professor is characterized by continued emphasis on competent and effective teaching as well as the continued development of a sustained pattern of inquiry and publication in refereed journals and other research/creative activities that demonstrate contributions to their academic discipline. In addition, Associate Professors will exhibit increased contributions in professional service at the program/school/college/university, as well as state/regional/national/international level.

The process of considering a COE faculty member for promotion to Associate Professor and tenure must commence no later than the beginning of the sixth year of tenure-eligible employment and be completed before the end of the six-year probationary period. Determination of the maximum probationary period begins upon the faculty member's initial appointment to a tenure-track rank, calculated from the month and calendar year in which the appointment was initially made.

**Professor**

The rank of Professor can be earned only by the COE faculty member who has demonstrated a high level of continued growth in, and has a cumulative record of substantial peer-reviewed publication and/or peer-reviewed creative activity, engagement in seeking external support for scholarly research (when appropriate for the field of study), teaching excellence and professional service/community engagement contributions. While differential levels of performance in each of these areas may be evident, COE faculty candidates' academic achievement and professional reputation should be superior and should have resulted in national recognition.

**Clinical or Research Faculty**

COE faculty members hired for Clinical or Research Faculty positions serve as Clinical Instructors, Clinical or Research Assistant Professors, Clinical or Research Associate Professors, or Clinical or Research Professors (depending on their highest academic degree and their level of experience). Clinical or Research Faculty who choose to work toward promotion will follow the appropriate RPT guidelines.

**IV. COE GUIDELINES FOR REAPPOINTMENT, PROMOTION, AND TENURE****RESEARCH/CREATIVE WORK**

As determined by each COE School, research/creative work is a function that serves to advance the discipline through the development, refinement and application of knowledge. COE faculty may provide evidence of scholarly activities in a variety of mechanisms appropriate to the

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discipline and based on their initial appointment letter. Consideration will be given not only to what has been accomplished, but also to the promise of future scholarly achievement.

### **TEACHING/INSTRUCTION**

As with scholarship, the qualities of teaching and future potential as a teacher are major factors affecting the decision to grant promotion and tenure to a COE faculty member. The effectiveness in teaching is reflected by student learning and improvements in the overall learning environment, including the development and enhancement of the curriculum. Teaching includes not only instruction, but also advising and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students. The nature of teaching may be defined differently among the COE schools. Nonetheless, given OSU's commitment to excellence in teaching, the overall quality of faculty candidates' teaching will be fully considered in all promotion and tenure decisions.

### **OUTREACH/EXTENSION/SERVICE**

As determined by each COE School, faculty members are expected to make professional contributions through outreach/extension/service to their discipline, school, college, university and community. Faculty contributions to professional service are necessary for sustaining and advancing the teaching and scholarship mission of the COE. These professional service commitments begin during faculty members' first year. The extent of these professional outreach/extension/service responsibilities will change over the course of the faculty member's academic career.

Promotion in rank recognizes exemplary performance of a faculty member. Recommendations for promotion and tenure originate with each COE School. Each School will develop and maintain written procedures to be utilized in promotion and tenure considerations. Each School will also develop and maintain specific written standards for promotion to each professorial rank. Each School's academic standards regarding RPT must have the approval of the COE Dean and the Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The evaluation process must be based on a comprehensive assessment of the COE candidate's record of research/creative work, teaching/instruction, and outreach/extension/service since initial appointment or since the last promotion. This assessment should take into account the quality of outcomes as well as their quantity; it should also acknowledge the creativity of faculty work and the impact of the faculty member's work on students, on the field(s) in which the faculty member works, and on others the university serves. Interdisciplinary work, public scholarship and engagement, international accomplishments and initiatives, technology transfer initiatives, and other special kinds of professional activity by each COE candidate should be considered when appropriate. The relative importance of these criteria may vary among the three different COE Schools; therefore, criteria against which individual COE faculty members are judged must reflect varying assignments and must align with the work assignment specified in their annual appraisal and development (A&D) documents.

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Since the primary responsibility for establishing the criteria for promotion and tenure rests with each COE School, each School must have an RPT document that clearly specifies:

1. the indices and standards that will be used to determine whether COE faculty candidates meet the requirements for reappointment;
2. the indices and standards that will be used to determine whether COE faculty candidates meet the requirements for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor;
3. the indices and standards that will be used to determine whether COE faculty candidates meet requirements for promotion to Professor; and
4. the goals and expectations to be used in evaluating faculty performance in annual appraisal and developments.

In addition, the standards established by each COE School will define the criteria of research/creative work, teaching/instruction, and outreach/extension/service in ways that reflect the School and its mission; and must delineate the tangible evidence that the faculty member must provide to document, not simply the attainment of minimal accomplishments, but an appropriate record of sustained excellence.

How the School's standards apply to a specific faculty member's duties should be made clear at the time of appointment and reviewed in the annual A&D process. Adjustments in the workload expectations for faculty members may occur over time in keeping with changing institutional and personal priorities, but these must be discussed and documented in annual A&D reviews which are signed by the faculty member, School Head and Dean.

## **V. COE REAPPOINTMENT, PROMOTION, AND TENURE FACULTY COMMITTEES**

### **School RPT committee**

The composition of the School RPT committee and identification of those faculty members eligible to vote on personnel actions shall be specified in each School's RPT guidelines. These guidelines shall address the following:

- Voting faculty members are required to be at the same level as, or above, that being sought by the faculty candidate.
- If a School cannot complete its personnel committee with voting faculty of appropriate rank from within the School, members of the committee in consultation with the School Head will solicit faculty from the other Schools or similar departments/disciplines at the university to assist the personnel committee with the review and recommendation.
- Given that faculty from a given School may serve on the School and/or the COE RPT committee, they must vote only once and only at one level.

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- Faculty members applying for reappointment, promotion or tenure may not serve on their School RPT committee in the year of their application.

### **College of Education RPT committee**

The COE must have a college-level RPT committee. Guidelines for the composition of the COE RPT committee shall take into account the following:

- The committee shall consist of members of its tenured faculty elected by its tenured and tenure-track faculty. Committee members voting on a personnel action under consideration must be at the same rank as, or above, that being sought by the COE faculty candidate.
- The composition of the COE RPT committee shall be representative of all COE Schools (two from each School).
- COE faculty members applying for reappointment, promotion or tenure may not serve on the COE RPT committee in the year of their application.

The primary responsibilities of the College RPT committee will be to ensure that fairness and consistency has been maintained within the review process at the School RPT committee level and the School Head level. The College RPT committee may examine such documents as: (1) the dossier provided by the faculty candidate, (2) the academic standards that have been adopted by the faculty candidate's School, and (3) the Statements of Recommendation provided by their School's RPT committee and School Head for fairness in procedure and review at the School level and consistency within the COE.

A quality review of the faculty candidate's dossier will occur when: (1) the case of a split decision (one approval and one denial at the School RPT committee and the School Head levels); the College RPT committee will review the documentation provided by the faculty candidate and provide a professional recommendation to the COE Dean regarding the qualifications of the candidate for reappointment, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure; and (2) the faculty candidate has the option to formally request a quality review of his or her dossier by the College RPT committee before the dossier is forwarded to the COE Dean.

The COE RPT committee will provide a written recommendation to the COE Dean that indicates whether the personnel action being considered is supported. If there is a divergence of opinion within the committee, both majority and minority opinions shall be indicated within a single recommendation letter.

College-level RPT policies must be approved by a vote of all tenured and tenure-track faculty within the COE, by the COE Dean, and by the Provost.

Regarding the COE reappointment, promotion and tenure process, the order of the formal review process is as follows:

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1. School RPT committee
2. School Head
3. COE RPT committee
4. COE Dean
5. Submission of dossier(s) to the Provost

## VI. COE RPT TIMELINE

The COE reappointment, promotion, and tenure review process officially begins in September. The essential responsibility of meeting all of the reappointment, promotion, and tenure deadlines rests with the COE faculty member; therefore, significant procedural activity on behalf of the candidate must occur prior to the September submission.

### **September 15** (no later than)

The COE faculty member must provide written notice to the School RPT committee chairperson and the School Head that she or he is planning to be considered for promotion with tenure. Faculty members who have reached their mandatory promotion with tenure year will receive a letter from the School Head notifying them of that requirement. In addition, the School Head notifies faculty members by September 15 that they have through January 15 to assemble and submit complete materials for a full review. At this time (September 15), the School Head also notifies faculty members of the deadline dates for providing additional materials for the review and for certifying their academic dossiers for promotion with tenure.

### **September 22**

By September 22, each COE faculty candidate seeking promotion/tenure (Associate Professor) or promotion (Professor) must submit to their School RPT committee, a file of academic materials (partial dossier) that will be sent to the external reviewers and examined by their School RPT committee.

### **October 7**

By October 7, the School RPT committee sends the external reviewer list for each faculty candidate to the School Head. The School Head sends the file of academic materials, as required in that School's RPT document, to each candidate's external reviewers.

*Note: The dossier for COE faculty candidates being considered for tenure and/or promotion should include a minimum of three letters from external reviewers who have been asked to evaluate the candidate's accomplishments and potential. Schools may require additional external appraisals where appropriate or desirable for their respective disciplines.*

*External evaluators should be leading scholars in candidates' disciplines and especially knowledgeable about candidates' areas of expertise. The three required external reviews must be obtained from individuals with no direct professional or personal interest in the advancement of the candidate's career (they should not be former advisors or mentors, and generally should*

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*not be co-authors or co-investigators on previous work). The dossier must specify clearly the relationship of each external reviewer to the candidate and should contain a brief description of each external reviewer and relevant credentials. All solicited external review letters received before the deadline must be included in the candidate's dossier.*

*In determining who are selected as external reviewers, the COE faculty candidate should be asked to provide a slate of names; the School Head and the School RPT committee should also provide names; and from these two lists a group of at least three should be selected in a fair and objective manner for contact. The faculty candidate may also specify the names of persons who should not be considered as possible reviewers, provided he or she specifies valid personal or professional reasons for the exclusion.*

*A copy of the letter that is sent to external reviewers shall be provided to the COE faculty candidate and included in the dossier. The candidate may waive the right to access outside reviews. Such waivers shall not be assumed, implied or coerced, and must be executed in writing prior to solicitation of outside reviews. The scope of the waiver shall be clearly indicated in writing prior to solicitation of outside reviews. A copy of the executed waiver shall become a part of the candidate's dossier. Any letter soliciting an outside review shall inform the potential reviewer of the extent to which the contents of the review will be known to the faculty candidate.*

### **January 15**

By January 15, faculty candidates must sign the RPT form that states they have been given the opportunity to review all of the academic materials contained in their dossiers and that their dossier is complete. Committee review and deliberations about the recommendation on faculty candidates will not begin until their dossiers have been certified by each faculty candidate. Therefore, the recommendation letters from the School RPT committee, School Head, and Dean *are not* included in the dossier at this point in the process.

*Note: Deadline dates are approximate and will be used unless a change occurs in the university calendar of events. If a deadline date falls on a holiday or weekend, the effective date shall be the next working day.*

### **On or About January 15 - February 14**

The School RPT committee makes its recommendation regarding each faculty candidate to the School Head after extensive evaluation of each candidate's contributions in the three major areas of research/creative work, teaching/instruction, and outreach/extension/service, as appropriate. The School RPT committee shall prepare a Statement of Recommendation regarding reappointment, promotion and/or tenure for each faculty member. This statement must be added to each candidate's RPT dossier prior to review by the School Head. Additionally, a copy of the School RPT committee's Statement of Recommendation shall be given to each

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faculty member in a confidential manner, within five working days, after the recommendation is finalized.

The COE School Head's Statement of Recommendation to the COE Dean must address how the faculty member has or has not satisfied each applicable School academic standard/criteria for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure. The statement must detail whether or not the performance of the faculty member adequately fulfills the published academic school, college, and university standards for the proposed personnel action. The School Head's statement must be added to the candidate's RPT dossier prior to review by the college-level committee, and the Dean. If the School Head is unable to act in accord with the School RPT committee recommendation, the reasons shall be communicated in writing to the faculty committee.

A copy of the School Head's Statement of Recommendation shall be given to the COE faculty candidate in a confidential manner within five working days after the School Head's recommendation has been finalized.

#### **On or About February 15 - March 14**

The COE RPT committee is charged with determining whether the School's evaluation of each candidate has been rigorous, consistent and based on the School's written academic standards/criteria and, if applicable, any additional evaluation specified in the COE RPT guidelines.

In the circumstance where there is a split decision or an appeal, the COE RPT Committee will generate a statement of recommendation. A copy of the COE RPT committee's Statement of Recommendation is to be added to the faculty candidate's RPT dossier prior to review by the COE Dean. This statement shall be given to the faculty candidate in a confidential manner, normally within five working days, after the recommendation is finalized and signed by the chair of the COE RPT committee.

The COE Dean, after reviewing all materials and other recommendations, submits a Statement of Recommendation to the Provost. The COE Dean shall make a professional assessment regarding whether (1) the School's evaluation of each candidate has been rigorous, consistent and based on the School's written academic standards/criteria, (2) the faculty candidate's dossier adequately supports the recommendations provided at each level of review, and (3) the action recommended by the School RPT committee, the School Head, and the COE RPT committee is warranted.

A written report of this professional assessment will be added to the faculty candidate's dossier and forwarded to the Provost within the Statement of Recommendation. A copy of the COE Dean's Statement of Recommendation shall be given to the faculty candidate in a confidential manner, normally within five working days, after the recommendation is finalized and signed by the COE Dean.

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**On or About March 15 - May 31**

The dossiers of all COE faculty candidates under review are to be submitted to the Office of the Provost. In the review process, the Provost may seek counsel from the university-wide Faculty Committee and others as deemed appropriate. Written input from the university-wide Faculty Committee and/or the individual administrators consulted will become a part of the respective candidate's dossier and their Statement(s) of Recommendation will be considered by the Provost in final deliberations.

A copy of the Statements of Recommendation shall be given to the COE faculty candidate in a confidential manner, normally within five working days, after the recommendations are finalized. If the Provost's recommendation is negative and differs from that of the Dean, the Provost is responsible for communicating in writing to the COE Dean, School Head, and COE faculty candidate the reasons for the disagreement.

**On or About June 1 – 30**

Final institutional review of the personnel actions submitted by the Provost may be conducted by the President. A list of actions is then developed which university administration recommends to the Board of Regents for final action. Reappointments, promotions and confirmation of tenure must be approved by the governing Board of Regents except as authorized by Board of Regents' policies. Normally, recommendations are submitted to the Board of Regents for consideration during a June meeting. When approved, the Board specifies the date on which the reappointment, promotion and/or tenure will become effective.