

**Tenure and Promotion 101 or Frequently Asked Questions**  
**For administrative assistants**  
(unofficial document)\*

1. **What is tenure?** Tenure provides job security for faculty who have successfully completed a probationary period. The purpose is to protect outstanding faculty from being terminated for non-educational issues including personal beliefs, personality conflicts with administrators or board members, etc.
2. **Who is eligible for tenure?** To be eligible for tenure, full-time tenure-track faculty at the rank of assistant, associate or professor are expected to have a doctoral degree, or its equivalent, and have strong potential for development as a teacher and a scholar.
3. **When can a tenure-track faculty member apply for tenure?** All tenure-track faculty are considered annually for tenure unless the faculty member requests in writing to defer to the following year.
4. **What is a tenure start date?** There are two start dates, Jan 1 (mid- year cycle) and Aug 16 (regular cycle), depending on the date the candidate began their tenure track clock/calendar. See the “tenure clock and post-tenure review table”
5. **Where can I find the tenure and promotion forms?** The new Microsoft Word forms, used by candidates, and the departmental forms used by the chairs and deans can be found at <http://www.sc.edu/tenure/tenureandpromotion.shtml>.
6. **Where can I find directions for putting together a tenure and promotion file?** See “Order of the File” document on the Tenure & Promotion web site under “forms and templates.”
7. **Can unit chairs email letters, CV, and research materials to external reviewers?** Yes
8. **Are digital letters and signatures acceptable in tenure and promotion files?** Yes
9. **Can an emailed letter from an outside reviewer be used in a file? Is a digital signature required?** An emailed letter from an outside reviewer may be inserted in a file. A digital signature is not required.
10. **How do I bookmark a file?** See “Order of the File” document on the Tenure & Promotion web site under “ forms and templates.”
11. **What criteria should the candidate use?** For tenure, the candidate has a choice of criteria— either the criteria in place when the candidate was hired or the criteria currently in place. For promotion to professor, the candidate must use the criteria currently in place. It is conceivable that the candidate will choose to be reviewed under two different criteria and that will be the candidate’s right.
12. **Is there a certain format for the secondary files?** “The secondary file may contain paper documents, electronic media (CD, DVD or Flash drive), or a combination of both supporting the claims of the candidate to tenure or promotion.” See *UCTP Guide to Criteria and Procedures* , Jan 2012

13. <http://www.sc.edu/tenure/documents.shtml#general>, on the Tenure & Promotion web site for deadlines.
14. **Where can I get help with my tenure and promotion questions?** Options include, the Tenure & Promotion web site at <http://www.sc.edu/tenure/tenureandpromotion.shtml>, contact Rhonda Filiatreault, Office of the Provost at 803-777-2808, attend the annual tenure and promotion orientation held on Reading Day and conducted by the chair of the UCTP. For more details call Faculty Senate at 777-6073.
15. **What is a penultimate year, sometimes referred to as decision year?** Penultimate means next to last, so for the tenure track faculty, it refers to the sixth year of the probationary period.
16. **What is the probationary period for untenured faculty?** Faculty hired as tenure-track assistant professors have a maximum of six years to receive tenure. The final year of the probationary period applies to faculty who have been denied tenure by the end of the decision year. These faculty remain employed only during the seventh and final year and cannot apply again for tenure.  
  
Sample probationary period for tenure-track faculty at assistant professor rank  
Year 1 – 2010-2011 – start of tenure clock  
Year 2 – 2011-2012  
Year 3 – 2012-2013 - third year review  
Year 4 – 2013-2014  
Year 5 – 2014-2015  
Year 6 – 2015-2016 – penultimate year or decision year for tenure  
Year 7 – 2016-2017 – last year of probationary period for those denied tenure
17. **What is third year review?** It is the review of a tenure-track faculty in the third year, after a faculty member is appointed, to determine if progress is being made toward the faculty member successfully achieving tenure and to determine if they should be retained.
18. **What determines a mid-year decision?** A tenure-track start date of January 1 or promotion to the rank of professor.
19. **Why the change in submission dates for mid-year files?** The Office of the Provost changed the mid-year calendar to help distribute the review of tenure and promotion files and to lessen the amount of files reviewed during the academic year.
20. **What materials can be sent to an outside reviewer?** Candidate's CV, candidate's personal statement, samples of work by the candidate, correct unit t/p criteria are sent to the outside reviewer asking them to apply USC unit criteria as they evaluate the file.
21. **What is the unit criteria?** The specific written criteria and procedures for tenure and promotion that clearly communicates the unit's expectations to faculty concerning scholarly productivity in teaching, research and service for each academic unit. Unit criteria are listed on the Tenure & Promotion web site and are available in the dean's office.

22. **Do I need an outside reviewer's summary template?** A sample letter is available in the *UCTP Guide to Criteria and Procedures*, Jan 2012 under "Letters of Referees."
23. **Does the candidate ever see the letters from the outside reviewers?** No, the external reviewer's letters are inserted at the unit level.
24. **What does the unit chair handle and what does the department chair handle, regarding the primary file?** See "Order of the File" document on the Tenure & Promotion web site under "forms and templates."
25. **What if a ballot is not checked, not signed? Does the name of the voter need to appear on the ballot?** A blank ballot counts as an abstention.
26. **Where can I get Blackboard help?** Blackboard support and training is provided by UTS. A training calendar is available at <https://www.uts.sc.edu/events/>. Call 777-1800 for Blackboard support.
27. **When is the President's decision about tenure and promotion files sent to the candidate?** The President sends his letter of recommendation at the end of the fall (mid-year cycle) and spring (regular cycle) semesters to the candidates' deans' offices and the deans' office distributes the letters.
28. **What is a tenure clock extension?** To provide flexibility for tenure-track faculty members when life events happen that may hinder faculty members from fully demonstrating their professional qualifications for tenure. See policy ACAF 1.31
29. **What information can a dean share with a candidate in an oral or written summary of the file?** "The dean, after consultation with the provost, shall respond with a detailed summary of the evaluations included in vote justifications, in letters from external referees, and in administrative reviews, and with the vote of the UCTP". Identity of referees and faculty members will be protected. See *Faculty Manual*.
30. **Does sabbatical leave affect post tenure review?** No
31. **Does a promotion in rank restart the post-tenure clock?** Yes. Tenured faculty are reviewed every six years unless during the previous six-year period the faculty member is advanced or retained in a higher position such as a dean, chaired professorship, promotion to higher professorial rank. See *Faculty Manual*.

**Reference Sources:**

Faculty Manual: <http://www.sc.edu/policies/facman/index.shtml>

University Committee on Tenure and Promotion Guide to Criteria and Procedures: <http://www.sc.edu/provost/forms/goldenrod.pdf>

Unit Criteria: <http://www.sc.edu/tenure/unitcriteria.shtml>

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