

**GUIDANCE ON PROMOTION FOR ASSISTANT PROFESSORS IN THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**  
at the University of Illinois at Chicago

Adopted by the Department of History  
May 2011, Amended October 2022

The granting of tenure is a major decision on the part of the University and the Department, and it is likewise a critical milestone in the career of the faculty member concerned. The award of tenure carries with it the assurance of continuing employment for as long as the faculty member chooses to remain with the university, that is, until resignation or retirement. Tenured appointments can be terminated only for adequate cause, with the burden of proof being on the university to show through a due process hearing why the faculty member should not be retained. Hence the decision to grant tenure is not made lightly. At UIC, all tenure-track faculty are assumed to have the potential to meet the criteria for tenure and promotion.

The document that follows will explain i) the Department's role in preparing Assistant Professors for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure, and ii) the departmental context in which the tenure decision is made. There is also a segment outlining the kind of criteria that contribute to a successful promotion case. And finally, a chronology of the year-long process of applying for promotion to Associate Professor is appended.

**1. The Tenure Decision in the Department of History at UIC**

The tenure review process begins in the candidate's Department and then proceeds to the College, the University, and finally the Board of Trustees. At each level, those reviewing the candidate's record are likely to have less specialized knowledge of his or her discipline and specialization. Accordingly, it is important for both the candidate and those helping to prepare the promotion papers for review beyond the Department to clarify both the candidate's achievements and the criteria by which the Department's decision has been made--that is, to interpret to a more general audience the reasons why this candidate deserves tenure in the field of History.

A. The Department and University require convincing evidence that the past record and performance of the applicant meet the criteria for promotion.

B. The granting of tenure also assumes that the faculty member will progress and develop in the future and will in time compile a record that will ensure promotion to Professor and, ideally, the enjoyment of a distinguished academic career. So the granting of tenure is based on a standard of scholarly excellence and confidence of future achievement beyond what has already been accomplished.

C. Because tenure is about the future as well as the past, the specific criteria cannot be exact. The University and the Department seek evidence that the applicant is developing as a publishing scholar, an effective teacher, and an active university colleague and citizen of the historical profession.

D. Assistant Professors should be aware that the tenure process imposes a tight schedule. Since Assistant Professors normally come up for tenure in their sixth year, it is generally the record for just five years that is being evaluated. Moreover, the process of publishing a scholarly monograph is lengthy. Often, a year or more elapses between the submission and final acceptance of manuscript, since the press has to obtain referees' reports, and the author almost always has to make revisions. A first monograph will not only have been accepted, but also normally be in press by the fall of the sixth year.

E. The guidance offered in this document is based not only on Departmental policy, but also on the standards, outlook, and procedures that faculty and university officials involved at the other levels of the University's promotion process will bring to a tenure case.

**2. How an Exemplary Tenure Case Might Look....**

Cases for tenure and promotion are based on the candidate's performance in research, teaching, and service. There follows a discussion of some of the ways in which a record of high quality in these three areas can be demonstrated and documented. The following paragraphs are offered as examples of activities that contribute

to a strong and convincing case.

### **Research & Publication**

The centerpiece in a tenure case for an Assistant Professor in History is normally the publication of a scholarly monograph in the candidate's field of expertise. Most Assistant Professors choose to publish a substantially revised version of their dissertation, although this approach is certainly not a requirement. The press that publishes this book should be known for its highly rigorous review process, which has established its reputation in scholarly publishing.

The Department also looks for evidence that the candidate has engaged in scholarly activity that is not confined to the revision of all, or part, of her/his dissertation. Such evidence includes, but is not limited to, publication of refereed articles in scholarly journals, chapters in scholarly books, edited books, and review essays as well as conference papers, lectures, and the development of scholarship on the internet and/or participation in other electronic media of scholarly communication. There should also be evidence that a second major research project is being developed and may even be in progress. The P & T papers submitted by the Department require a statement written by the candidate describing current and future research. The publications and other research activities of the candidate lend credibility to these plans, as an indication that the Assistant Professor is embarking on a viable scholarly career. The candidate should also be developing professional standing in his/her branch of history. Evidence for such development can include, but is not limited to, book reviews; refereeing for publishing houses, periodicals, and award-granting agencies; involvement in the management or editing of a scholarly journal; and participation at professional conferences.

To recommend promotion, the Department needs to be satisfied that the candidate has made a significant contribution to knowledge within the discipline of history. The candidate's scholarly record is evaluated by the tenured faculty in the Department. Reports from at least five scholars in the candidate's field selected by the Department are also considered. Also helping to demonstrate the candidate's achievements in research are evidence of scholarly discussion, citation, and review of the candidate's work, as well as fellowships and prizes awarded internally and externally and grants that have been applied for or obtained.

### **Teaching**

The Department expects its faculty members to perform well as teachers. Teaching is evaluated through a) reports filed by colleagues on the basis of in-class visits and b) formalized student evaluations. Awards for teaching received by the candidate also serve as evidence of superior teaching. The teaching record includes not only courses taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels, but also membership on dissertation committees, participation in comprehensive and preliminary examinations, and student advising. Development of new courses or new topics in courses, other kinds of teaching innovations, and publications on pedagogy are also relevant to the teaching record.

### **Service**

A record of active service can strengthen a case for promotion and tenure. Faculty members are expected to contribute to the management of the department, although less service is expected of junior faculty than of senior colleagues. Service may also include participation on committees or as department officers, membership on committees within the university, extra-curricular student support and advising, and active participation in professional organizations. Community involvement that is relevant to the candidate's expertise, as well as lectures for non-professional audiences, enhance the service record.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

There should be past and continuing examples of scholarship, research, teaching, mentoring, professional development, or service relevant to the institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In applying for promotion, you will be asked to write a "statement on efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion" in which you are asked to "provide examples of scholarship, research, teaching, creative activity, or service relevant to the institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and describe your plan for future activities.

## **3. Criteria for Promotion of Clinical Faculty**

For promotion to Clinical Associate Professor, candidates will be expected to have experience at the Clinical

Assistant Professor rank or equivalent; to have made effective contributions in the area of teaching, the development of new courses/curricula, and the training or supervision of graders and teaching assistants and/or student teachers and student teaching supervisors as appropriate to the position; to have shown some participation in service; and to have made appropriate contributions to relevant scholarship.

**In addition, promotion in the clinical track deviates in the following ways from promotion on the tenure track:**

- As specified by the College, only faculty who are engaged in clinical activities are eligible for motion in the clinical track. Those whose responsibilities are limited to teaching are not eligible for promotion in this track.
- non-tenure clinical track promotions require only 3-5 letters from external reviewers.
- Peer faculty in a rank at/or above where the faculty member is being considered for promotion may be solicited to be external reviewers. That is, reviewers may be clinical track faculty members.
- Materials in the package sent to an external reviewer should include the following: a) updated curriculum vitae; b) unit clinical norms and standards; c) the candidate's statement on accomplishments and future plans in areas reflected in the unit norm and standards (e.g. statement related to the teaching, service, professional practices, and/or associated scholarship, as defined by the unit); and d) the candidate's portfolio that can include other documentation providing evidence for the candidate's excellence in accordance with the unit norms and guidelines as appropriate (stated above).
- The letter of solicitation to the external reviewers, will include language that asks for an evaluation of the candidate in accordance with the unit clinical norms and standards – including teaching, service, professional practices, and as appropriate, associated scholarship *as provided by the campus*.

### **Typical Chronology of a Promotion Case to Associate Professor**

*Spring Semester of third year:*

The University of Illinois at Chicago requires all untenured assistant professors to undergo a “third year/mid-probation review.” This review involves a departmental evaluation of scholarship, teaching, and service. A written third year review report is given to the assistant professor and sent to LAS. The purpose of the report is to assess the progress of the assistant professor, to offer constructive suggestions for improvement if needed, and/or to provide the basis for a recommendation of termination of employment for unsatisfactory performance. The University requires the inclusion of the third-year review as signed by the candidate and the Department Chair in the promotion and tenure papers.

*Spring Semester of fifth year:*

February - March. All Assistant Professors must come up for promotion by their sixth year. An Assistant Professor may request consideration for an early promotion. In that case, the tenured members of the Department will discuss whether to proceed with it. A promotion committee will be established, if the decision is in the affirmative, just as is done for Assistant Professors in the sixth year. Departmental approval is required for early cases to proceed.

Each candidate will be informed of the composition of the committee and will provide it with the necessary materials. The promotion committee generates a list of external referees. The candidate may indicate the names of scholars who, because of conflict of interest or because of known hostility or public disagreement, should not be asked. The candidate, however, has no veto rights over potential external referees; the Department alone reserves the right to select the referees. The candidate is not permitted to see the contents of the external letters.

*Fall Semester of sixth year:*

August. Data for the promotion papers are assembled in collaboration with the committee chair and the department chair.

September. Two meetings of tenured faculty are normally held two weeks apart to consider and vote on the case. The first is informational—to hear reports on research, teaching and service presented by the members of the promotion committee. The second is deliberative—to discuss the case and vote on it. In order to vote on the case, faculty members must either be present at both meetings, or formally request and obtain permission to vote despite not being able to be present at one or more of the meetings. Permission is granted or denied by faculty vote, depending on the specific circumstances. In cases where proxy voting is allowed, confidentiality is maintained by requesting a staff member to submit the proxy vote(s) at the meeting. If the vote is negative or closely divided, a candidate for early promotion may wish to withdraw at this point. The papers are then assembled by the Chair and the staff, and the Chair's recommendations and endorsements added, before the package goes to the College.

*Spring Semester of sixth year:*

December. College Executive Committee and Dean discuss and vote on the case.

March. University Promotion and Tenure Committee discusses and votes on the case, after which it goes to the Provost and finally the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees for the final decision. Appeals of this decision are allowed only on procedural grounds.

Assistant professors are encouraged to consult the website of the Office of Academic Affairs for further information on Promotion and Tenure forms and procedures:

[http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaa/oaanew/policies\\_proced.html](http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaa/oaanew/policies_proced.html)