

The Rutgers AAUP-AFT provides these general guidelines based upon the University's Academic Reappointment /Promotion Instructions, University policies, and experiences of the staff of the Rutgers AAUP-AFT. These guidelines are provided for general informational purposes and the information provided herein may not apply or be advisable in all circumstances.

Frequently Asked Questions

Prospective Candidates for Reappointment, Promotion and/or Tenure

1. When will I be evaluated?

For tenure-track faculty, evaluations generally occur in the 3rd and 6th year of the probationary period. That is, appointments are usually for two three-year terms with the evaluation for tenure occurring in sixth and final year of the probationary period.

Tenured faculty who have been in rank at least six years and have not been evaluated for at least four years may self-initiate an evaluation. A department may determine to put forward a candidate at any time.

Clinical appointments are renewable appointments and may be for terms of three or more years.

Faculty who wish to be considered for promotion to a higher rank should discuss the appropriate timing with their department chairs/deans/directors.

2. Are there circumstances where a faculty member can request to have time excluded from the probationary period?

Yes. Provisions in the Collective Agreement between the University and the AAUP-AFT allow for an exclusion of time from the probationary period if a faculty member has: 1) been on Family Leave; 2) taken a leave of absence without pay; and/or 3) has become a parent during the probationary period or immediately prior to appointment. The language explicitly disallows exclusions during the final year of the probationary period. Faculty members with questions regarding the probationary period should consult the language of the Agreement (Articles XVI and XVII) and contact the AAUP-AFT with any questions.

3. When should I talk with my department chair about the evaluation process?

It's never too soon to have a discussion with your department chair about the evaluation process. As a prospective candidate, you need to have a full understanding of the requirements and standards appropriate to your field -- engage your department chair and colleagues in an ongoing dialogue regarding these matters. If your department chair isn't able to provide you with the information you seek (and even if she or he is), talk with other senior colleagues in your department or in areas allied with your own.

4. What can I do during the probationary period to help me prepare for the task of putting my packet together?

Keep an on-going file to document your activities in the areas of research, teaching and service (or criteria appropriate to your appointment). It's recommended that you start the task of completing Form 1 from day 1. Form 1 is the "Recommendation Information Form" that's found in the Academic Reappointment/Promotion Instructions. Keep the Form on your computer and update it continually. Keep copies of invitations, contracts, awards, etc., that you will want to include in your packet in a separate file for easy access when it's time to put the packet together.

It's also a good idea to keep notes regarding people you meet at conferences or elsewhere who are known experts in your area. This may be helpful when considering potential external letter writers -- all the better if they've remarked favorably on a presentation or recent article, etc.

5. Whose responsibility is it to prepare Form 1 for inclusion in the packet?

It is the candidate's responsibility to prepare and present Form 1. The department chair (or Unit Director for the Libraries) is required to sign off on the Form and indicate whether the information provided is accurate or, alternatively, indicate why, in the Chair's view, the information is not accurate. The candidate should be in close contact with the department chair regarding the preparation of Form 1 and the

Chair and candidate should have a shared understanding of the “why’s and how’s” of what’s included. For example, is there sufficient explanation of the quality of a journal or press? Are papers appropriately placed under the category of “refereed” or “non-refereed?” Is the current status of work accurately described? Has the candidate been too selective (or not selective enough) in representing contributions in teaching and/or service?

6. I have several projects underway that haven’t yet been submitted and/or accepted, can I list them?

Form 1 allows you to list “works in progress”, e.g., books, articles, conference proceedings and presentations, notes, reviews, abstracts, etc. You do not have to submit items listed as “in progress” with your supplementary materials, but you’ll want to have something to show if a colleague should ask. If you have questions, they are best answered in consultation with your department chair and/or senior colleagues.

Note also that packets remanded for re-evaluation (following a determination that defects occurred in the original evaluation) include status updates to Form 1 -- positive changes in the status of materials originally listed as “in progress” could be significant in a re-evaluation taking place later in time. (Updates may not include items not originally listed.)

7. Some of my work doesn’t exactly “fit” the categories of Form 1 – what should I do?

If you and/or your department chair determine that something doesn’t fit in one of the categories on the Form, create your own section or include the material under “other.” The important thing is that your accomplishments appear in some way. You and/or department chair may want to check with the dean’s office to ask for guidance in this area.

8. Should I prepare a Personal Statement to be included in the packet?

Yes. Though it’s not required, this is your chance to put all the pieces together. The further your packet moves away from the department,

the less likely evaluators will know the context in which to place the content. It's unlikely they will personally know you or your work and/or have any specific knowledge or expertise in your field.

Use the personal statement to explain who you are and what your work is about. Explain, for example, how your teaching relates to your scholarship and vice versa, what the trajectory of your research is, what you think your experiments in the lab will lead to, what you have accomplished and how you intend to build on it. Provide appropriate information and avoid the mistake of using the personal statement to provide excuses for a lack of productivity or problems in one or another area. If you think that an explanation is required with regard to something specific that happened (or didn't happen), stick to information that you think an evaluator charged with making an academic judgment would consider relevant and pertinent.

It may make good sense to have two personal statements: One that is prepared to accompany the packet for the internal evaluation and one that is specifically prepared to be sent with materials to the external confidential letter writers (this personal statement can also be included in the packet).

Having two statements allows a candidate to discuss the details of his/her research in "shorthand" to external experts who will understand the jargon and in more general terms for members of the PRC and other levels of internal review.

9. How long should the personal statement be?

There's no prescribed length. Our advice is to be concise – anything longer than four or five pages is probably too long. Of course, there are exceptions and the best advice is to seek advice and review by others. Ask trusted colleagues to review the statement – does it cover the bases and provide a window through which your accomplishments can best be viewed? It is a good idea, also, to ask someone who is not familiar with your work or discipline to read the statement – is it clear and appropriately focused?

10. What does the “packet” consist of?

When you submit your packet, it will include Forms 1 and 2 (applicable criteria), your personal statement, and the inventory of supplementary materials. The supplementary materials (e.g., copies of articles, manuscripts, contracts, teaching evaluations, etc.) will accompany the packet throughout the evaluation.

Form 3 and 3a are later added to the packet and these provide reports regarding the external letters. The confidential letters are added and, as the packet makes its way up through the different levels of review, the evaluative narratives are also added and available for review by later levels.

11. Should I provide an inventory listing of supplemental materials?

Yes. The list of materials submitted should be provided to the Chair when you sign Form 1. The supplementary materials and the index of materials will accompany the packet throughout the evaluation – be sure that you present the materials in an organized way – one that will allow for quick and easy access.

12. What should I do if I’m missing evaluations for a course?

Talk with your department chair and do everything possible to locate them – explanations must be provided on Form 1 for missing evaluations.

13. Am I required to provide translations of material(s) not written or reviewed in English?

Consult with your department chair and/or dean regarding the materials you would like to have translated in the packet. The dean’s office may agree to pay to have the materials translated and/or work with you and the Chair on figuring out how to best go about ensuring that the materials are translated so that evaluators will have a full understanding of your work and its impact. With regard to external letters, departments may ask colleagues who are able to provide translations.

These translations may then be appended to the external letters and accompany the packet through all levels of review.

14. Do I have a role in determining who will be solicited to provide external confidential letters of evaluation?

The department chair is required to consult with you regarding appropriate experts in your field – the dean and the department chair will determine, though, who is ultimately solicited. External referees are normally at the rank of full professor and are selected on the basis of their standing in the field and institutions they are associated with. It's very important that you do your homework and have the information needed to make the case for suitability of the referees you suggest. You should not be personally associated with the external referees. Letters from advisors/mentors/collaborators are not likely to be counted as “real” letters.

You may want to request a (non-confidential) letter from a significant collaborator confirming your account of the nature of the collaboration and the relative contributions. This letter could be included with the supplementary materials, and could be referenced in the Form 1 explanation for multi-authored work.

Note that you may also provide a list of referees that you prefer not be solicited -- again, though, the department chair and dean make the final decision with regard to who is or is not solicited. If a letter is solicited and received from a writer on the candidate's do-not-solicit list, the candidate's written explanation of why the external writer/letter should be excluded will be attached to the letter in the packet.

15. How many names do I need to suggest for potential outside reviewers?

A minimum of seven letters is required – it is usual for departments/units to solicit ten or more. If you have a concern regarding having too few or too many names to suggest, talk it over with your department chair and/or trusted colleagues. The importance of having appropriate referees solicited cannot be overstated.

16. What if an “expert” in my field isn’t a faculty member associated with an academic institution?

Though unusual, there’s no prohibition against soliciting letter writers not associated with an academic institution (e.g., someone working in government or industry may be well placed to evaluate the research). The goal is to identify individuals who are most qualified and best placed to say why your scholarship is important, how it’s important and what impact it’s had on the field. (The explanation of why this is an appropriate expert would be particularly important in such a case.)

17. Should I contact the individuals I suggest as potential letter writers?

No. The Instructions state: “Under no circumstances shall the candidate contact experts whose names he/she has submitted for consideration, or engage in any substantive discussion about his/her promotion case with any individual whom he/she knows to be serving as an external referee.”

18. Will I know who was solicited or how many letters were received?

You may ask to review and/or be provided a copy of your packet, including the evaluation narratives after the evaluation is completed. (Forms 3 and 3a and the confidential letters will be removed.) Often, outside letters are referenced by number in the narratives of the department, A&P Committee and/or dean. One can often ascertain from these references how many letters were received. You will not be told who was solicited nor the identity of the writers of letters received – this information will be kept strictly confidential from you.

19. What should I do if I’m contacted by an individual who has been solicited to evaluate my work?

This can be awkward. We suggest that you explain that the University’s procedures prohibit the candidate from discussing his/her promotion case with an external reviewer and politely suggest that he/she contact the department chair if additional information is needed

or if there are questions about the process. And, of course, thank them for agreeing to write a letter.

20. Is it too late to add things to the packet if something comes through or something changes status after I've signed Form 1?

It's not too late if: 1) the dean concurs that the change is significant; 2) the change has occurred since the initiation of the packet; and, 3) the PRC hasn't made its final recommendation.

An addition to the packet on or before December 1 will result in the packet being circulated to each earlier level of review in order to allow for a revised evaluation if that level determines a revision is warranted by the addition. If the addition is made after December 1, it is circulated only to the dean and the PRC (unless the department has made a negative recommendation in which case it's also circulated to the department.)

21. My department is very small and has only two tenured members. Who will evaluate my packet at this level?

If a department has fewer than six tenured faculty members (the minimum number required to constitute the "departmental" committee) at or above the rank of the candidate, the dean will appoint an appropriate number of ad hoc committee members. These members may be chosen from related disciplines in the same faculty, college or school and may also be chosen from the same discipline in other units (campuses) of the University.

Do your homework and discuss with your department chair who on the Rutgers faculty might be most appropriate as ad hoc committee members. Ask your department chair to communicate to the dean the names of individuals that you would jointly recommend, if any. Ideally, someone whose research methodologies are similar and/or whose area(s) of expertise have crossed or benefited from your own would be found. At a minimum, someone who is familiar with your area and/or who is known to take a careful and deliberate approach in the evaluation process should be asked to serve.

If it's the case that the majority of faculty evaluating your packet at the departmental level is ad hoc, they may request to meet with you before making their recommendation. You might consider expressly asking the department chair and/or dean to be provided this opportunity.

22. My department is large and consists of faculty in a variety of specialties. Many use different methodologies and I'm afraid they may not understand the complexity or impact of my research. Is there anything I can do to address this?

The department chair (in consultation with the tenured members of the department) can decide to appointment a reading committee to review your scholarly work and prepare a written assessment of it for the department's consideration. This can be especially important in large areas with several subfields or specialties. While it would be ideal if all evaluators read and were able to understand each and every article or manuscript included in a packet, it doesn't always happen. Having a reading committee report prepared by individuals who are especially qualified can be critical to an informed assessment by your peers in the department and also at later levels. While it's the prerogative of the chair/department, if you believe that a reading committee report is advisable in your case, ask for it.

23. I don't feel that my department chair is supportive and I have concerns that he/she's not taking his/her responsibilities as seriously as I would like. What should I do?

Be informed about the process and know your rights and obligations (as well your limitations) in it. Read the Instructions and the relevant policy/regulations related to reappointment/promotion/tenure considerations. Ask questions, put them in writing and seek advice from senior colleagues and/or the office of the dean when and where appropriate. Keep good notes throughout the process . . . things that you may hear or come to know about what happened in your evaluation could be important later.

24. When will I know how my department has voted?

You should be informed in writing of the department's recommendation within five working days after the vote. This notification will come from the department chair and will be the only notification you will receive prior to the final notice.

25. Will my department chair be involved in the process after the packet leaves the department?

The department chair's role is critical throughout the process – if questions or issues arise related to the packet or candidacy, the department chair is likely the first contact. He/she serves as the “spokesperson” for the department and the candidacy. The chair may be asked by the Appointments and Promotions Committee to meet to answer questions or otherwise “amplify the department's report.” If the dean intends to make a recommendation different from that of the department, he/she is required to first meet with the department chair.

26. My dean/director is new and doesn't know me or my work. Should I be concerned about this?

If timing and opportunity permit, ask for a brief face-to-face meeting with the dean and/or area dean. Ask your department chair or senior colleague(s) to attend with you. It's best to do this at the earliest possible time so that the dean can connect your face and name to any news of your work that comes his/her way. Your department chair should keep the dean apprised of your accomplishments (this means that you must keep the chair apprised) – the more familiar the dean is with your work and evidence of its impact, the less work he/she will have to do when it's time to evaluate your packet.

27. What happens if members of the PRC need more information or have questions about my work?

The PRC will ask if information or clarification is needed – most likely these inquiries will go first to the dean who may then turn to the department chair if he/she needs information. If the PRC, on first review, is inclined to differ with the dean's recommendation, the Committee will ask the dean to meet to explain his/her views (it's possible, also, that the department chair will be asked to accompany the

dean to this meeting). The Instructions also permit the Committee to return the packet to an earlier level for additional information it may need to make a determination – if this happens, the packet goes to intervening levels before being resubmitted to the dean.

28. Should I be concerned that there isn't someone from my discipline serving on the PRC?

The faculty members selected to serve on the PRC are chosen for their scholarly distinction as individuals and are not selected to represent specific disciplines or areas. The PRC's function is to advise the President from a "University-wide" perspective.

29. Does the President ever reach a conclusion different from the PRC?

Yes, but very rarely.

30. When is the final decision made and how am I notified?

If the both the department's and dean's recommendations are negative, the packet does not progress to the PRC and the dean is supposed to notify the candidate of the final decision in writing within ten days of receipt of the knowledge that the final decision has been made. (An exception to this rule occurs for candidacies that are self-initiated, also referred to as "rank review"—these cases proceed to the PRC for evaluation regardless of the recommendations at earlier levels.)

Deans are normally notified of final actions following the April and June meetings of the Board of Governors. Deans may then notify candidates informally of the final outcome. In all cases, candidates are to be notified in writing of the action within ten days of receipt of knowledge by the Dean of the final action.

31. Where do I go if I need more information?

If you have additional questions or concerns about the process for evaluation contact the AAUP-AFT office – if we don't have the

answers, we will try to assist you in finding them and are available to confidentially discuss any concerns you might have.

32. What is the role of the union in the evaluation process?

The AAUP-AFT does not provide specific advice regarding packet preparation. Nor do we interpret standards in any given field or have a role in determining the quality and/or merits of a candidacy – these are matters of faculty governance and are best determined by the faculty:

“Informed judgments concerning a faculty member’s accomplishments can be made only by qualified colleagues. Such subjective judgment by persons competent to evaluate duties, responsibilities, services, and accomplishments will protect the interest of professors themselves, the department, the college, the University, and the students better than any objective rating that could be devised.” [University Policy 60.5.15].

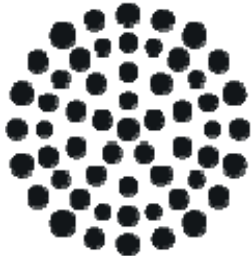
Faculty members have a significant and weighty obligation in this area of faculty governance . . . to their colleagues, to the health of their department and school, and to the university.

“As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas professors show due respect for the opinions of others. Professors acknowledge academic debt and strive to be objective in their professional judgment of colleagues. Professors accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution.” [AAUP Statement on Professional Ethics, as revised and adopted in 1987]

All candidates are entitled to a full and fair evaluation process – this requires that all faculty members participate fully and appropriately.

33. Is there anything I should do if I learn that my candidacy was unsuccessful?

Request a copy of your packet and review the evaluation narratives. Talk with your colleagues if you have questions about the process. The AAUP-AFT will automatically send you information regarding your rights under the Collective Agreement and the grievance process. If requested, we will assist you in determining whether grievable defects occurred and in utilizing the negotiated grievance procedure.



Rutgers Council of AAUP Chapters

**American Association of University Professors
American Federation of Teachers**

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

11 Stone Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Ph: (732) 964-1000 Fax: (732) 964-1032

aaup@rutgersaaup.org / www.rutgersaaup.org