

# Tenure and Promotion Policy

School of Engineering  
University of New Mexico

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## Introduction

This document describes the processes the School of Engineering (SOE) follows in its evaluation of faculty promotion and tenure cases. It is framed within the general context defined by the *UNM Faculty Handbook*, which holds precedence over this policy. The document outlines the School's internal processes and procedures and reflects the expectations and values of our faculty and its academic leaders. The document is not intended to be fully prescriptive and it will be refined as the conditions in the School evolve and our expectations change. Fair application of these processes will always demand good judgment, a sense of collegiality, and fairness.

## School Promotion and Tenure Committee

The SOE Promotion and Tenure Committee is a standing committee of the School and shall have one full-professor representing each department in the School. The committee will be appointed by the Dean in consultation with the department Chairs. Service on this committee is meant to be for a three academic year term with the expectation that an entire three-year term must pass before a faculty is eligible for reappointment on the committee—on occasion, extenuating circumstances may necessitate an earlier termination or reappointment. The committee selects its own chair, but one can serve as chair for at most two years. To keep the committee fresh and to distribute the workload among full professors, two committee members will step down at the end of each academic year.

*Note:* In light of this fact, the initial members of the committee will actually serve varying terms: two will step down after one year and two more will step down after two years. The inaugural committee chair shall be the one member serving the entire three-year term.

The committee's main function is to review all promotion cases and to ensure that the school's expectations are met in each case. The committee will carry out its deliberations in private and will eventually forward its recommendation to the Dean. The committee is designed to be advisory to the Dean.

## Departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee

Each department will form a departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. The committee and its chair will be appointed by the department Chair in consultation with the faculty. The committee members must hold tenure in the School and the chair of the committee must be at the rank of full professor. In appointing the committee members, the department should take into consideration concerns relating to diversity, continuity, demonstrated level of performance on the committee, and the need for renewal.

## Confidentiality

Strict confidentiality will be maintained regarding the workings of the SOE Promotion and Tenure Committee. No committee member may discuss anything regarding the committee deliberations with anyone outside the committee, except with the department Chair and the Dean. A candidate for promotion or tenure may not discuss anything regarding the committee deliberations with anyone on the committee, only with the Dean.

During the phase when the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee is guiding a candidate for promotion or tenure to prepare the dossier, the candidate is free to discuss and seek advice from others in the department and the committee is free to solicit clarifications and additional information directly from the candidate. However, strict confidentiality rules apply to the internal deliberations of the Department Promotion and Tenure Committees, i.e., during the evaluation phase; no committee member may discuss anything regarding the actual committee deliberations with anyone outside the committee, except the department Chair and the Dean.

## Categories for Evaluation

The categories for faculty performance evaluations include teaching, scholarly work, service, and personal characteristics (*UNM Faculty Handbook*, Section B.1.2). Special attention is devoted to the following aspects within the School of Engineering.

1. **Teaching** – Teaching is evidenced through: 1) classroom performance in lectures or laboratories, 2) individual advisement of students including those conducting projects, theses or dissertations, 3) development of new courses or curricula, and 4) outside recognition or publications of educational material.
2. **Scholarly work** – In the School of Engineering, scholarly work is generally understood as research performance. Evidence of scholarly work includes the following: 1) a research agenda that the faculty member is actively pursuing, 2) a research program involving graduate students, which results in theses and dissertations, 3) development of proposals to funding agencies, 4) externally funded research awards and contracts, 5) archival publications in reputable, peer-evaluated sources pertaining to the faculty member's research discipline, and 6) patents.
3. **Service** – Service activities include: 1) membership on Department-, School- and University-level committees or other special assignments, 2) serving as faculty advisor to a student organization, 3) serving on the editorial board of a science or engineering journal, 4) serving as a referee for journal articles, 5) serving as a proposal reviewer for government agencies, 6) serving as an officer or committee member in a professional organization, and 7) leadership positions in professional conference meetings.
4. **Personal characteristics** – This category relates to the personal traits that influence an individual's effectiveness as a faculty member and includes intellectual breadth, emotional stability and maturity, ethical behavior, and collegiality. By its nature the appraisal of personal characteristics must be handled with flexibility and great prudence.

## Expectations

To achieve promotion, tenure, or both, a faculty member is required to be effective in all four areas. The *UNM Faculty Handbook* stipulates that excellence in either teaching or scholarly work constitutes the chief basis for tenure and promotion. Service and personal characteristics are important, but normally round out and complement the faculty member's strengths in teaching and scholarly work. With the University aspiring to being nationally and internationally recognized as a premier research institution, research excellence continues to be an important consideration in all tenure and promotion decisions within the School of Engineering.

### *Promotion to Professor*

To be promoted to Professor, the faculty member shall have attained high standards in teaching and shall have made nationally recognized scholarly contributions to his/her field. In general, a sustained research funding program, demonstrated research impact, a demonstrated record of graduating doctoral students, a demonstrated stature on a national scale, and active involvement in service activities both within UNM and external to UNM constitute the basis for promotion consideration. Promotion is granted with the expectation that the individual will continue to make such contributions.

### *Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure*

It is UNM policy that tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor are normally granted together. Any departures from this policy must follow the guidelines provided in the *UNM Faculty Handbook* (Section B.4.8). To attain promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, a faculty member must have established a strong scholarly reputation.

To demonstrate excellence in research, the faculty member shall have developed an independent research program as evidenced by national-level funding, significant peer-reviewed publications, and advisement of doctoral students who have graduated or are close to graduation. Continued growth of the individual's research operation is to be expected.

To demonstrate excellence in teaching, the faculty member must be recognized by students and colleagues as an effective, caring, and innovative teacher. Additional credentials may be accrued by having obtained national-level funding on pedagogical strategies, having developed innovative methods in teaching, or having published papers on engineering education in reputable journals. Finally, the faculty member's teaching excellence is enhanced by having been recognized with honors and awards within or outside the University. Authoring a textbook will also be viewed favorably.

### *Mid-probationary Review*

At the time when the mid-probationary review is conducted, a faculty member shall have displayed his/her ability to be an effective instructor and researcher in the School of Engineering. The individual is expected to demonstrate that he/she is on the right path, in all aspects, toward attaining tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. An upward trajectory in terms of research program development is essential to receive a positive recommendation.

### **Candidate Dossier**

A candidate's dossier must include the following documents, on separate pages (inclusion of additional documents, unsolicited letters, etc. is strongly discouraged):

- biographical information including
  - publications (list submissions separate; list published and accepted papers together; separate refereed journal papers, refereed conference papers, book chapters, articles in the popular press, etc.)
  - patents (list only those already issued or filed)
  - awards and honors
  - professional standing, external service, and service to UNM
  - funding history (grants funded, role on the grant – PI or co-PI, total budget and the UNM portion on multi-institutional endeavors; list separately all pending grants)
  - students supervised, graduated, and their placement (if known); separate MS and PhD students
  - students in the pipeline and their current stage – pre qualifier, qualifier, pre proposal, proposal
- teaching statement
- research statement
- statement of professional aspirations for the next decade
- citations over a 5-year term (3 years in case of mid-probationary review), sum of citations for 3 most cited papers, and the source of citations
- teaching evaluation scores for the most recent 3 years
- 5 most significant publications in the last 5 years (with brief summary)
- list of 6 colleagues willing to serve as references for the candidate including a brief statement of their qualifications (*not needed for the mid-probationary review*)

Candidates are strongly encouraged to limit the length of the “teaching statement,” “research statement,” and “statement of professional aspirations” to at most 2 pages each. The remaining components of the dossier are added by the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee:

- confidential teaching evaluation by a peer
- list of contacted reviewers and response status; separate those supplied by the candidate and those selected by the committee; include rank and institutional affiliation
- professional letters of reference (*not needed for the mid-probationary review*)

### **Evaluation and Promotion Process**

#### *Departmental Promotion & Tenure Committee Role*

The process starts with the candidate submitting his/her dossier to the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee. During this initial stage, the responsibility of the committee is to guide the candidate towards developing the strongest possible case and to decide on the outside reviewers (in consultation with the Chair and the candidate—see below). In a subsequent phase, the responsibility of the committee shifts to an evaluation of the case seeking to secure all the information necessary for the voting tenured faculty to assess the candidate’s dossier, i.e., getting reference letters as well as any other information that might help the voting faculty in its consideration of the candidate. The committee will summarize the information it has gathered in the form of strengths of the candidates and issues of concern. The committee role is not to take a position on the case, but to prepare and present all the relevant data and concerns to the departmental faculty.

### *Selection of External Reviewers*

The dossier should include at least 6 external anonymous letters of reference (the candidate will not be provided the names of the external reviewers). Either the department Chair or the committee chair, on behalf of the department Chair, will request the reviews, using a standard letter. The candidate will provide a list of 6 names outside UNM to serve as external reviewers in the case. The candidate may also provide a list of external reviewers who should be excluded from consideration along with an explanation of the reasons why they should not be contacted. The committee, in consultation with the department Chair and the tenured faculty, will develop a list of four to five names of independently selected external reviewers. External reviewers should be well-established scholars from multiple reputable institutions, and have a rank equivalent or higher than the rank the candidate aspires for. It is recommended that at least one of the external reviewers be the Chair of a department in the candidate's discipline of rank higher than the candidate's department. The committee will make sure that at least 3 letters of reference will be from the list provided by the candidate and at least 3 letters of reference are from the list of references selected by the committee. The committee will keep a list of all contacted references and, when appropriate, the reasons why the reviewers declined the request to provide a reference.

No letters are required for the mid-probationary review.

### *Evaluation and Vote by the Faculty*

1. A tenured faculty member of rank equal to or higher than that the candidate aspires to, should be assigned by the departmental Promotion and Tenure Committee, in consultation with the department Chair and the candidate, to observe the candidate's classroom teaching—ideally, during two most recent semesters. The candidate will be informed in advance when his/her teaching will be observed. The evaluating faculty member will file with the committee an evaluation form within one week after the class visit to be included in the candidate's dossier.
2. The candidate will make an oral presentation in the middle of the fall semester to the whole faculty of the department on his/her accomplishments in research and teaching, with a special focus on his/her professional aspirations for the next decade. The purpose of this meeting is to provide a forum for the candidate to inform the rest of the faculty of his/her accomplishments. The date of the one-hour presentation will be determined in consultation with the candidate, the committee, and the department Chair. The dossier sent to the external reviewers will be made available to the faculty by the date of the presentation.
3. The voting faculty will hold a closed-door preliminary assessment of the candidate's dossier after the presentation in order to raise any issues which need to be investigated further or to identify clarification questions regarding any aspect of the candidate's case. Most often, this meeting is expected to be brief.
4. After the dossier is complete with the external reviews, the voting faculty will hold a meeting, discuss the candidate's case/dossier and hold a secret vote to be recorded by the department Chair. For a tenure and promotion case, there should be separate votes on promotion and tenure. As per *UNM Faculty Handbook*, every voting faculty member will include an evaluation along with his/her vote.

### *Chair's recommendation*

The department Chair in his/her recommendation letter to the Dean, will summarize the discussion that took place during the faculty meeting, report the vote and give his/her own assessment of the candidate's case. The voting faculty is encouraged to write informative comments on the candidate's dossier, which could help in the candidate's evaluation outside the department. For mid-probationary review, it is expected that along with the recommendation, the Chair will discuss which aspects of the candidate's accomplishments need to be further strengthened to prepare for consideration for promotion and tenure. The Chair will discuss the review and recommendation with the candidate. The candidate will also be advised in writing whether the recommendation is negative or positive.

### *Opportunity for the candidate to respond*

In case the department Chair's recommendation to the Dean is negative, the candidate will have the right to rebut and appeal to the Dean. If requested, the candidate will be provided all confidential information including external reviews after proper redacting to protect the confidentiality of the external reviewers.

### *Review by SOE Promotion and Tenure Committee*

In the next step, the dossier will be reviewed by the School Promotion and Tenure Committee. The department Chair will make a presentation of the candidate's dossier to the committee in the presence of the Dean. The committee may choose to seek clarifications, whenever needed, on the dossier, from the department Chair. The committee will make a written recommendation to the Dean, to be presented by the committee chair.

### *Review by the Dean and Recommendation to the Provost*

The Dean will review the dossier and make a recommendation to the Provost. The candidate will be informed in writing of the Dean's recommendation. If the Dean's recommendation is negative, the candidate will have the right to rebut and appeal to the Provost. If requested, the candidate will be provided all confidential information including external reviews after proper redacting to protect the confidentiality of the external reviewers.

**Attachments**

*Teaching Evaluation Form*

*Standard Reference Request Form*

*List of Attachments Sent to Reviewers*

*Standard Ballot for Faculty Vote*