Teachers College
Promotion and Tenure Frequently Asked Questions*

We share Teachers College Diversity Vision Statement as it intersects with materials presented throughout this “FAQ” document. Faculty should know that the TC promotion and tenure committee embraces this diversity statement.

It is our shared responsibility to prepare professionals who recognize, reflect and embrace the diversity of a global community. Diversity includes race, ethnicity, culture, language, exceptionality, gender, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, regional/geographic background and religion.

We are committed to recruiting, supporting and retaining a diverse community of students, faculty and staff dedicated to inclusivity, equity and educational opportunities for all.

Our commitment is realized through instructional practices and curricula, student admissions policies, faculty and staff recruiting and hiring practices, collegial engagement, and reward systems. This commitment is reflected in all written departmental and college policies and procedures, as well as the practice of ongoing assessment to ensure progress and continual improvement.

1. What is considered the tenure year?

Teachers College defines the tenure year from October 1st to September 30th. Therefore, only scholarly work, course/teaching evaluations, service, etc. conducted between October 1st to September 30th each year should be submitted for review by the department, college, and/or dean to assist in making a decision regarding progress toward tenure. For first year faculty, the first tenure year decision is based upon work completed since starting in August.

2. What is considered a refereed publication?

The Teachers College Promotion and Tenure Document include refereed journal publications and refereed book chapters. It is important to provide evidence regarding how the refereed publications were reviewed. For example, were anonymous reviewers used? For book chapters, it is important to note whether the chapter was invited or was the chapter submitted, received an anonymous review, and then, was accepted for publication. Book chapters that are invited, reviewed, and then revised prior to publication are not considered peer-reviewed publications. It is important for journal and book chapters to receive anonymous peer reviews prior to being considered as a refereed publication.

3. Do the College Promotion and Tenure Committee and Dean automatically agree with departmental promotion and tenure recommendations?

No, the College P&T Committee and the Dean make independent recommendations. The College Promotion and Tenure Committee and Dean review all materials, including department decisions, submitted prior to making a recommendation regarding tenure and/or promotion.

Updated March 2, 2021
4. **Will the College Promotion and Tenure Committee and Dean understand my area of research? Teaching? Service?**

It is important to make sure information included in the P&T narratives is clear and concise. The College Committee is composed of faculty from all departments within Teachers College; therefore, a comprehensive description of your research and how it impacts your field will help the College Committee and Dean. For example, describing how three years of research resulted in one publication in a top tier journal within your field can help the College Committee and Dean understand the importance of your scholarly publication and the amount of work required to publish in your area. A detailed description of the courses taught, the amount of preparation required, and rigor of the course content in your narratives also is helpful. For example, a course teaching students how to administer and interpret psychological measures may require a significant amount of instructor preparation, feedback, and supervision. Helping the College Committee and Dean understand the extent of your service activities also is important. For example, if you serve on an editorial board and conduct 15 manuscript reviews per year it is important to share this with the College Committee.

5. **If I give a list of accomplishments in teaching, research, and service, is this enough for the College Committee and Dean to make a recommendation?**

As indicated above, it is important to describe your work and contributions beyond just listing accomplishments within your vitae or P&T electronic folders. Providing narratives as a preface to each section of your electronic folders (teaching, research, and service) be explicit about how your work in the given area meets your department’s criteria—this helps the College Committee and Dean better understand your work. Helping the College Committee and Dean understand your line of research and how it contributes to your field is important. Discussing how your service has contributed to meeting department, college, and university goals and objectives can help the College Committee understand your service contributions. Describing your teaching philosophy, discussing your course evaluations, and sharing how you have modified your courses are ways to help the College Committee better understand your teaching.

6. **When should I apply for promotion to full professor?**

It is recommended that you begin your discussion regarding applying for promotion with your department chair and/or the chair of your department tenure and promotion committee. Prior to applying for promotion, it also is recommended that you read the department, college, and university promotion and tenure documents carefully. Decisions about being promoted to full professor are based on evidence of significant impact of scholarly work so faculty should describe how expansively their scholarship has influenced thinking at not only the College/university levels, but also, their discipline/field of expertise.

The decision on whether to apply for promotion often depends on several factors. For example, the quality and consistency of your publications is important to consider. Applying for promotion too close to when you were last promoted to Associate may result in a negative recommendation if you have not demonstrated sufficient consistency in publishing and/or are not able to demonstrate the impact of your scholarly work and activities at the national level. However, there...
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is no specific timeframe that ensures a favorable recommendation. For example, someone who has published consistently for four years, stops publishing three or four years, and then applies for promotion probably will not demonstrate the consistency in publishing of scholarly work needed for promotion to full professor. In this case, it would be better for the individual to wait and apply for promotion after demonstrating consistency in publishing.

7. Can I get promoted to Professor based upon exemplary teaching and service alone?

Although exemplary teaching and outstanding service are highly valued within Teachers College, faculty can assume they will not be promoted to Full Professor without demonstrating a consistent record of publications. Because Ball State University continues to maintain its national recognition as a research institution, there is an expectation of publishing in refereed publications (i.e., journals, book chapters).

8. How many refereed publications do I need to get tenure and promoted to Associate Professor?

There is not a set number of publications that a faculty member needs to have published in order to obtain tenure or promotion to Associate Professor. Rather, faculty members are encouraged to strive for quality and quantity, and to explain how their work exemplifies both. More specifically, when discussing their research, the faculty member should place it in the broader context of their field and explain its impact within their discipline. The quality of the journals in which their work has been published can also be presented as evidence of the importance of the work. Faculty should write their research narrative for a broad audience, many of whom will be unfamiliar with their specific field or what constitutes high quality work therein.

Collaboration is encouraged within Teachers College when conducting research and publishing. In addition, it is important to serve as senior author on refereed publications as well. To assist the Teachers College Promotion and Tenure Committee, it is helpful for faculty to describe their specific contributions on multi-authored publications. Indicating the impact factor, acceptance rate, and review process for each refereed publication also is helpful to the Teachers College Promotion and Tenure Committee in understanding the scholarly contribution of publications.

9. Why do the College Promotion and Tenure Committee conduct fourth year pre-tenure reviews?

The University requires a fourth-year pre-tenure review. The primary goal of the fourth-year pre-tenure review is to provide feedback to the faculty member. Although the Teachers College Promotion and Tenure Committee will make a recommendation regarding progress toward tenure during the fourth-year pre-tenure review, the feedback to the faculty is intended to assist in identifying areas in need of improvement and strengths.

10. What can I expect this year because I requested and was allowed to stop the tenure clock last year?
The university outlines specific requirements within the Faculty Handbook. If a faculty member requested to stop the tenure clock last year and the request was approved, essentially, they asked that the year not count toward tenure. For example, a faculty member completing their third year toward tenure has requested that their third year not count toward tenure. During their third year, they needed to take care of an immediate family member who was recovering from a major illness, which required them to travel extensively and left less time for them to conduct research. They formally requested that their third year not count toward tenure and it was granted. A year later (their fourth year) would be considered their third-year tenure review although they had been at Ball State for four years. Their third and fourth year would be rolled into one and considered their third-year tenure review. Also, their seventh-year tenure and promotion recommendation would be made in their eighth year but would be considered their seventh-year review.

11. Should I follow a specific format for my vitae?

Although there is no required format, the College Committee does recommend the vitae follow a consistent style. APA style is preferred, but more importantly the candidate should pick some consistent style. Don’t use abbreviations and make sure to proofread the materials! Make sure your comprehensive and abbreviated vitae are consistent. For example, if the yearly vita says an article is in press but the comprehensive vita says it has been submitted, the "in press" nature will be suspect. If the candidate does not demonstrate excellence of presentation, the committee cannot make assumptions in a favorable direction. You might consider listing accomplishments from the most recent year backward to the start of the promotion cycle. That way it is easy to get a sense of yearly growth and consistency.

12. What type of vitae should I submit each year?

Faculty in years 1 through 7 will need to submit a comprehensive vita and a vita reflecting their scholarly work for the past tenure year (October 1st to September 30th).

Faculty interested in pursuing promotion from associate to full professor need to submit a comprehensive vita and a vita reflecting their scholarly work since they were last promoted to associate professor.

13. Is there a size limit for my Promotion and Tenure Electronic Folder?

It is important to be selective with regard to your promotion and tenure materials. The goal should be quality and not quantity. A description and rationale in your narratives describing why you included material gives you the opportunity to shape the discussion around your work. The primary goal should be to only include material that demonstrates your unique scholarly contributions, the effectiveness of your teaching, and your professional service contributions. Only include information that relates to your professional activities. For example, including documentation that you served on the neighborhood cleanup committee would not be considered relevant service and could unnecessarily detract from the overall impact of the germane documentation.
14. Upon employment I was granted years toward tenure. How does this impact my fourth and/or seventh year tenure review?

It depends on the number of years you were granted at time of hire. Please note, faculty who are granted three years toward tenure will have a fourth-year pre-tenure review during their first year by the College Committee as outlined in the College P&T document.

15. How should I handle special circumstances?

Any person can face individual circumstances that influence their ability to make progress toward promotion and tenure. Faculty may make a request to “stop the tenure clock” when they face individually experienced circumstances. See question/answer #10 as well as departmental and college promotion and tenure documents for additional information about what to expect when you have requested and received permission to stop the clock.

In addition, special circumstances affect groups of faculty over a protracted period of time and influences the work trajectory those faculty members had planned in the absence of special circumstances. For example, a global pandemic, civil unrest, or a natural disaster could influence teaching, research, and service activities for numerous faculty simultaneously. When BSU provides an opportunity to “stop the clock” due to these special circumstances, faculty should decide if this course of action is appropriate for them. Faculty are encouraged to consult with the chair of their Departmental Promotion & Tenure committee, their departmental chair, and the chair of the Teachers College Promotion & Tenure committee as they weigh this decision.

Despite special circumstances, many faculty continue as usual with the promotion and tenure process and will benefit from documenting how the special circumstances have influenced their work. The narratives (executive, scholarship, teaching, service) should be used to demonstrate how faculty have “risen to the challenge” through their teaching, research, and/or service. Creative efforts to resolve challenges (e.g., redesigning courses, generating new or different lines of research, managing technology challenges, etc.) should be highlighted. In addition, faculty should describe their efforts even when challenges could not be completely overcome (e.g., delays in publication due to the publisher, changes in teaching responsibility, the differential impact of the special circumstances given your research methodology, etc.).

Faculty are encouraged to document their special circumstances while they experience them so the myriad ways the special circumstances influence faculty work can be referenced as faculty develop their narratives. Narratives should be written concisely but in sufficient detail that any colleague reviewing promotion and tenure materials at a later time can fully appreciate the magnitude of the effect that the special circumstances had on the faculty member’s work.

Finally, special circumstances may interact with unique, individually-experienced challenges (e.g., parenting and working during a global pandemic, teaching while students and faculty are distressed about acute social injustice events). Faculty with one or more marginalized and/or minoritized identifies (e.g., faculty of Color, disabled faculty, faculty identifying as LGBTQIA2S+, etc.) who experience cultural taxation should describe in their narratives how their contributions to scholarship, teaching, and service expand beyond the immediately observable lines on their
curriculum vitae. Cultural taxation often include service and/or invisible labor that is provided or extracted as a direct result of the faculty member's marginalized and/or minoritized identities. Similarly, faculty whose expertise uniquely places them in high demand for time- or labor-intensive service activities should describe how their efforts have a significant impact on their department, College, university, or field. Faculty are encouraged to describe how the intersection of special circumstances and unique, individually-experienced challenges cumulatively or exponentially influenced their work during the promotion and tenure period.

16. What should I do if I struggle to identify ways to resolve challenges resulting from special circumstances?

Faculty whose scholarship, teaching, and/or service have been deleteriously impacted by special circumstances should consult with their department chair, department promotion and tenure chair, and colleagues to brainstorm options for resolving challenges. Examples of managing some of the negative impacts of the special circumstances include but are not restricted to using alternative modalities (e.g., publishing with colleagues with overlapping interests whose data collection methods have not been delayed; using different research designs or publishing literature reviews; etc.) and/or different supports (e.g., completing university trainings to address societal changes more effectively). Faculty experiencing special circumstances may require very different solutions so administrators as well as promotion and tenure chairs are interested in helping you develop strategies that work for you. In the final analysis, decisions about how to present materials to the promotion and tenure committees is in your hands. Although administrators are here to support you, you should not feel pressured to alter your materials in a manner consistent with anyone else’s recommendations. As always, you should rely on the departmental and Teachers College promotion and tenure documents as your guide.

17. What should I know before requesting early promotion and tenure?

Prior to requesting early consideration for promotion and tenure, faculty should consult their departmental promotion and tenure document as well as the Teachers College promotion and tenure document. In addition, faculty are encouraged to consult with the chair of their Departmental Promotion & Tenure committee, their departmental chair, and the chair of the Teachers College Promotion & Tenure committee as they decide whether or not to submit their materials for early consideration of promotion and tenure.

In the absence of compelling evidence of excellence in teaching, research, and service, faculty should plan to retain the typical promotion and tenure trajectory (i.e., they are discouraged from requesting early promotion and tenure). Special circumstances can be addressed in conjunction with a request for early consideration for promotion and tenure; however, the expectation for faculty requesting early promotion and tenure will remain compelling evidence of excellence across teaching, research, and service. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to provide clear evidence of how their work in teaching, research, and service demonstrate that the standard of excellence that places their teaching, research, and service is well above and beyond what would be expected of all faculty members.
18. **How to I demonstrate the impact of my work?**

Positive promotion and tenure decisions are based upon faculty successfully demonstrating the impact of their work on their students, Ball State University, the community, and their field. Faculty use different research methodologies, teach in different settings (e.g., on campus, online, hybrid), and provide different types of service locally, nationally, and globally.

Faculty can most effectively describe their scope of influence and the force or magnitude of their work in their executive, scholarship, teaching, and service narratives. This can be accomplished by explicating the noteworthy impact their work is having not just locally, but in their respective fields. The executive narrative should synthesize the totality and uniqueness of each faculty member’s work in a way that demonstrates how their work reflects well on Ball State University.

Faculty who struggle conceptualizing how to demonstrate the impact of their work in their narratives are encouraged to consider how their work is transformative for our students and the surrounding community, how they are shaping conversations in their area of expertise nationally/globally, how their work is leading to paradigm shifts or meaningful changes on a societal level, etc. Administrators as well as promotion and tenure chairs are available to discuss the impact of your work with you if you need support in developing your narratives.

*This information is provided by the Teachers College Promotion and Tenure Committee and is not intended to be comprehensive or binding. Faculty should become thoroughly familiar with the Department, College, and University Promotion and Tenure Documents. In addition, faculty should read and become familiar with the Faculty Handbook. Examples are provided to assist and guide faculty but should not be considered comprehensive. Following the recommendations and examples does not guarantee a positive tenure and/or promotion recommendation.*