School of Engineering at the University of Vermont RPT
Guidelines for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty

In accordance with the “Agreement Between the University of Vermont and United Academics (AAUP/AFT)”, dated 12/22/2005 (referred to as the Union Contract hereafter), this document is developed to provide RPT (reappointment, promotion and tenure) guidelines for tenure-track and tenured faculty in the School of Engineering.

1. Timelines

A tenure track assistant professor will be appointed for an initial three-year term and may be reappointed for up to two additional two-year terms. At the start of the second and fourth years of service, the candidate for reappointment will be notified by the School’s Director in writing that the review process must begin. At the start of the sixth year of service, the candidate is required to apply for promotion to associate professor with tenure. Any request for an extension of the probationary period for tenure-track is governed by Article 14, Section 5, (d) as described in the Union Contract.

An untenured associate professor may be hired with an initial two-year appointment, with a reappointment for an additional two-year period. The procedure for the first reappointment of an untenured associate professor (not the tenure review) will follow the same protocol and timeline as for the first reappointment of an assistant professor except that the review process commences at the end of the first semester of the initial appointment.

At the discretion of the candidate and the School, an expedited tenure review may be requested for those candidates joining the University who previously held a tenured position at a peer institution.

A faculty member may become a candidate for the appropriate action at an earlier date than mandated by the preceding paragraphs. In such a non-mandatory tenure case, the faculty member must notify the Director before the end of the preceding academic year. The Director may provide some informal advice after possible consultation with tenured members in the School, but the decision for non-mandatory tenure and/or promotion application is with the candidate. Following the Director's Evaluation, a non-mandatory tenure candidate may choose to withdraw the current tenure and promotion application.

The evaluation procedures are identical for both mandatory and non-mandatory tenure reviews. The documentation prepared by the candidate, in coordination with the Director, will be consistent with a format approved by the faculty. Candidates are requested in the RPT documentation to explicitly address any areas recommended for performance improvement or enhancement identified in the prior RPT review.
An Associate Professor who wishes to be considered for promotion to the rank of Professor must notify the Director before the end of the preceding academic year in order that arm's-length evaluations can be organized over the following summer.

While no minimum time at the rank of associate professor is required, promotion to the rank of professor implies a well-established and documented record in teaching, scholarship and service. A candidate for promotion to professor should enjoy a recognized national or international reputation through demonstrated scholarship in the candidate’s technical area(s) of expertise or scholarship in engineering education, or both.

After the Director's Evaluation (see Section 8.1), a candidate for promotion to Professor may choose to withdraw the current application.

2. School Considerations

The School of Engineering is a research-oriented academic unit. The School supports and strengthens the mission of the University of Vermont towards the provision of innovation in research and scholarship, excellence in instruction, and public service to the citizens of the state, nation and world. The School aspires to be a center of excellence in teaching engineering disciplines at all levels, emphasizing both long-term academic preparation and shorter-term economic importance; and as a center for excellence in research and graduate education by developing strengths in a small number of focused research areas and by exploiting the School’s unique opportunities for collaborations with other strong research areas in the University.

Each tenured and tenure-track faculty member is expected to be an effective teacher and an active researcher in his/her research area. The quality criteria for effective teaching and active research can be found in the Union Contract (Article 14); however, the School’s perspective regarding teaching and scholarship is amplified further in subsequent sections of these guidelines.

3. RPT Evaluations in the School of Engineering

For reappointment, promotion and tenure (RPT) evaluations, the School applies the Evaluation of Faculty and Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Criteria and Procedures in the Union Contract (Article 14), and has the following additional specific descriptions.

The School’s RPT committee will consist of all its tenure-track and tenured members (i.e., the committee of the whole). Voting eligibility for particular cases is outlined in Section 8.2 of this document. The result of the ballot of eligible voters on a particular
candidate will constitute the collective assessment and recommendation of the School’s faculty. However, as the College’s by-laws require that three of the school’s faculty must serve on the College’s Faculty Standard’s Committee, those three elected members must recuse themselves of all involvement in the RPT process at the School level (i.e., reviewing written materials and involvement in discussion).

At the start of an academic year, the School’s RPT committee will elect a committee chair from one of the School’s tenured professors, if possible (if not possible, then a tenured associate professor may serve). The primary roles of the Chair are to ensure that the eligibility restrictions for voting are observed and that the faculty’s vote and comments are faithfully reported to the Director in a timely manner. An RPT Committee Chair cannot hold that position for more than two consecutive academic years.

The input of the non-tenured senior lecturers and lecturers regarding a candidate’s performance in the classroom, academic advising, and scholarship will be sought by the Chair of the School’s RPT committee. This information will then be included in the committee’s report to the Director.

The Chair of the School’s RPT committee, in conjunction with rest of the committee, and in consultation with the candidate, will appoint a two-person subcommittee for each candidate under consideration. If possible, the subcommittee should be composed of faculty who are tenured and of a similar or higher rank than that which the candidate is seeking. The subcommittee members are to be familiar with the candidate’s primary discipline and/or academic program, where possible. The role of the subcommittee is to review the candidate’s documentation before submission to the Director and the committee of the whole, to provide advice to the candidate, and to give a verbal and written assessment (not vote) of the candidate’s performance to the committee.

If the candidate so elects, she/he can request a letter of evaluation from the members of their academic degree unit (program). This letter would be transmitted to their two-person subcommittee who will then include it in the report to the committee of the whole.

Teaching

4.1 Individual Student Input on Candidate’s Teaching and Advising

Candidates will provide a summary of the numerical scores for their teaching evaluations for a minimum of the preceding 5 years. The Director’s office will provide copies of all of the students’ anecdotal comments for each of the courses listed by the candidate.
The candidate has the option of providing student opinion on the candidate’s teaching and advising by submitting letters from a selected group of students who have either completed coursework or are taking a course with the candidate or have been one of her/his advisees.

4.2 Peer Teaching Evaluations

The Peer Teaching evaluations and observations will be conducted in the manner prescribed by the School’s policy on Peer observation guidelines.

For each greensheet review, the Director will invite 2-3 faculty members to provide peer-teaching evaluations. The candidate may confidentially identify faculty members who for reasonable cause stated should not be invited for this purpose. All peer teaching evaluations will be done by qualified tenured faculty. The Director, in consultation with the candidate, may invite appropriate faculty members from other Schools or Colleges to provide peer-teaching evaluations. The peer evaluators shall be advised to review the candidate's course materials/teaching portfolio as well as to attend a minimum of one of the candidate's lectures.

4.3 Advising & Mentoring

4.3.1 Undergraduate
Candidates preparing greensheets will include a separate section on advising and mentoring undergraduates. In addition to student advisee numbers, it is important to include details with regard to both undergraduate and graduate advising, including:

1. availability for student contact,
2. frequency of meetings and other interactions with advisees,
3. inservice training for advising,
4. efforts to support the School in advising,
5. mentoring and involvement in undergraduate research, organizations and projects.

4.3.2 Graduate
With regard to the School’s graduate education mission, a candidate for tenure must provide evidence of successful graduate student advising/supervision to graduation and should show evidence of substantial progress of at least one advisee toward the PhD degree before final consideration for tenure. Candidates for promotion to professor must have a record of effectively advising Ph.D. students. Participation in graduate student committees should also be documented.
Research & Scholarship

5.1 Research
According to the Union Contract, "each faculty member is expected to engage continuously and effectively in creative professional activities of high quality and significance." All tenure-track and tenured faculty members must provide evidence responsive to this requirement for their RPT reviews. All tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the School are expected to actively engage in high-quality research. The candidate’s research activities are expected to be consistent with the Mission of the School and to support the graduate education program in the School.

Publication of refereed articles in both archival journals and conferences is important evidence of research and scholarship of high quality and significance; in some areas of Engineering, publication in top-tier, peer-reviewed conference proceedings can be considered as prestigious as publication in top journals. Acquisition of competitive grant and contract support is considered an indication of recognized research competence and productivity; however, this record of support cannot stand alone as evidence of scholarship. Similarly, invited lectures or publications, journal editorship, or service as a major officer in a professional society, may be considered as recognition of scholarly achievement. Patents, software products, monographs, book chapters, unpublished conference presentations, and other products of scholarly activity may also be considered. However, the School does not simply count the number of publications and/or the financial value of grants or contracts, nor does it take a restrictive, static view of what constitutes Engineering research. The emphasis in all instances is on research quality.

The Union Contract states: “In cases involving tenure and promotion to Associate or (Full) Professor the quality and significance of the work must be evaluated.” Accordingly, the candidate is required to provide evidence of the quality and significance of her/his scholarly products. For peer-reviewed journal publications, a common method for evaluating quality of the publication is the journal impact factor and a common method for evaluating significance of the research is the number of external citations garnered by the publication. The candidate may provide other information as desired to establish quality and significance of the work, such as acceptance rates and other information on the standards of the journal and its standing in the discipline. For conference proceedings, the candidate is asked to distinguish the level of peer-review (either fully-refereed, abstract-refereed, or non-refereed) and to provide information about the conference acceptance rates, if possible. For monographs and book chapters, the candidate is advised to provide information regarding the review process of the press, and whether or not the work was invited. Candidates are encouraged to outline the significant contributions of each major publication.
Collaborative, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary research is strongly encouraged. For joint publications, the candidate should describe her/his role in, and contributions to, the joint effort. The Director has the prerogative to contact selected co-authors for comments on the candidate’s contribution to the specific collaboration. For interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary work, the candidate is advised to describe the nature of the publication venue and the relationship of the research to Engineering.

**Service**

6.1 Service
Candidates must provide evidence of their involvement in service activities to their profession, to the University (including the College, School, and their Program), and external service to the community/public.

**Arm's-Length Evaluation**

7.1 Selection of Arm’s-Length Evaluators for Promotion and Tenure
For the following tenure-track/tenured faculty greensheet reviews, "arm's-length" evaluators will be solicited to provide external reports:

- tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, and
- promotion to the rank of Professor.

Arm's-length evaluators are individuals who do not have a significant personal relationship with the candidate. Former students, thesis advisors, colleagues, co-authors, or collaborators, for example, generally do not constitute arm's-length evaluators. In addition, arm's-length evaluators should:

1. Be "acknowledged scholars and practitioners in the discipline of the candidate at other institutions. These scholars and practitioners should ... be capable of providing an objective, informed assessment of the candidate's work." [The Union Contract, Article 14, Clause 5 (e, ii)]
2. Be tenured at their home universities (and for promotion to the rank of Professor, have the same or an equivalent rank), if they come from academia.
3. Have expertise in at least one of the candidate's research areas, and in the case of evaluators not from academia, their standing in the research area must be clearly identified.

The Director will inform the arm's-length reviewers of all pertinent facts regarding the candidate (including their teaching load/record), with the candidate's representative publications and other creative work, and will ask them for their assessments of:

- the quality of the candidate's research, teaching and service,
• the candidate's research contributions to, and its impact on, his/her research field,
• the candidate's productivity relative to other academics at a similar stage in their career,
• the candidate's potential as a research leader, and
• the publication and review standards of the journals and conference proceedings in which the candidate has published, and their standings in the discipline.

The Selection Process for reviewers:
1. The candidate is asked to provide 10 nominations.
2. The Director compiles 10 other names from other sources.
3. The Director shows the 10 other names to the candidate and asks the candidate to identify (i) any names that are not at arm's-length, and (ii) any names that the candidate deems inappropriate as evaluators (for reasonable cause). The Director may repeat steps 2-3 in order to have a sufficient number of names.
4. The Director selects and contacts 10 names from the combined list, with at least half selected from the candidate's list.

In extraordinary cases, exceptions to these guidelines may be made by mutual agreement of the Director and the candidate, and in such instances the Director will document reasons for all adjustments.

In the greensheets for all faculty to review, the Director will list the final 10 names (step 4) and mention who were nominated by the candidate and who were solicited by the Director independently. In all cases, the Director should provide a clear explanation of the professional qualifications of the evaluators and the process by which they were selected.

7.2 Selection of Arm's-Length Evaluators for Second Reappointment
For persons undergoing a second reappointment, two "arm's-length" evaluators will be solicited to provide external reports. Criteria and Procedures as expressed in Section 7.1 will pertain, with the exception that the selection process will be as follows:
1. The candidate is asked to provide 3 nominations.
2. The Director compiles 3 other names from other sources.
3. The Director shows the 3 other names to the candidate and asks the candidate to identify (i) any names that are not at arm's-length, and (ii) any names that the candidate deems inappropriate as evaluators (for cause). The Director may repeat steps 2-3 in order to have a sufficient number of names.
4. The Director selects and contacts 2 names from the combined list, with at least half from the candidate's list.
Both evaluators will be eligible (but not mandated) to act as evaluators in subsequent reviews for the candidate.

Eligible Voters

8 Faculty Input and Eligible Voters for RPT Reviews

8.1 Faculty Input to the Director’s Evaluation and Schedule for RPT Reviews

The Director should set an appropriate schedule for each greensheet review, such that the complete greensheets will be ready for faculty review at least 2 weeks before the submission deadline to the Dean's Office. Once the greensheets are ready for faculty review, all faculty members, tenured and untenured (including tenure-track/tenured faculty, research faculty, Lecturers, and Senior Lecturers) will be invited to review the greensheets and share their assessments and recommendations concerning the candidate with the Chair of the School's RPT committee within a week. The feedback will be faithfully summarized and included in the Committee Chair’s report to the Director. The Director will include those comments in her/his Evaluation of the candidate.

At the beginning of the second week after the greensheets are complete, the Chair of the School’s RPT Committee will convene (i) a meeting of all faculty members to discuss the greensheets, and (ii) a closed session for all eligible voters (as defined in Section 8.2) to vote by secret ballot on whether or not to recommend the candidate’s application. This numerical vote will be recorded and included in the report to Director and included in the Director's Evaluation. The vote will be valid once the majority of eligible faculty voters have cast their ballots. After the above faculty feedback and eligible voters' vote, the Director will decide whether or not to recommend the candidate's application, and will provide the candidate with a copy of the complete Director's Evaluation. With the written consent of the candidate, the Director's Evaluation will be made available to the voting members of the committee (see Section 8.2), if requested.

8.2 Eligible Voters for RPT Reviews

When a candidate applies for promotion to a particular rank, only those faculty members who are already at this rank or above are eligible voters. When a candidate applies for reappointment at a particular rank, only those faculty members who have successfully passed their reappointment at this rank are eligible voters.

• For a first tenure-track reappointment review, only tenured faculty members and those faculty who have successfully passed their first reappointment review are eligible voters.
For a second reappointment review, only tenured faculty members and those faculty who have successfully passed their second reappointment review are eligible voters.

For a tenure application, only tenured faculty members are eligible voters.

For a promotion application to Associate Professor, only Associate Professors and Professors are eligible voters.

For a promotion application to Professor, only Professors are eligible voters.

The Director is not an eligible voter, but is permitted to be present as an observer at the discussion and the vote of the committee of eligible voters.

Last modified: May 4, 2007

Approved by the faculty: May 4, 2007