

# Department of Computer Science at the University of Vermont

## RPT Guidelines for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty

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### 1. Introduction

In accordance with the [Agreement Between the University of Vermont and United Academics \(AAUP/AFT\)](#) (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 Department of Computer Science. For brevity, the term 'greensheets' in this document is meant to refer to both greensheets and bluesheets, as appropriate for the review.

### 2. Department Considerations

The Department of Computer Science is a research-oriented department. The Department upholds 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 Department aspires to be a center of excellence in teaching computer science 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 Computer Science'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 areas. The quality criteria for effective teaching and active research can be found from the Union Contract (Article 14).

### **3. RPT Evaluations in Computer Science**

For reappointment, promotion and tenure (RPT) evaluations, the Department 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.

#### **3.1 Student Selection for Teaching and Advising Evaluations**

1. The candidate will nominate 4-6 students for teaching evaluations and 4-6 students for advising evaluations (with possible overlaps) for reappointment, and 6-8 each for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor or for promotion to Professor.
2. An ad-hoc committee will provide up to 6 students for teaching and up to 6 students for advising (and up to 8 each for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor or for promotion to Professor):
  - a. The ad-hoc committee will be formed each academic year for all RPT candidates.
  - b. The ad-hoc committee will consist of at least two members.
  - c. The Department Office will provide (i) the candidate's student lists with grades since the candidate's last greensheet review, (ii) the candidate's current advisee list, and (iii) the lists from the candidate (step 1 above).
  - d. The candidate will be allowed to cross out students from each list with reasons.
3. The Chair will contact all students from each of the lists in (1) and (2), and will provide a memo in the candidate's greensheets detailing the selection process. In the event that the same student is selected to evaluate both teaching and advising, s/he may write a single letter that addresses both teaching and advising.
4. If the response yield is inadequate, the candidate and the Chair may consult and make additional solicitations. Solicitations and deadlines for responses should be made early in the review process to achieve sufficient yield.

In extraordinary cases, exceptions to these guidelines may be worked out by the Chair with the candidate, and the Chair will document the reason for all adjustments.

#### **3.2 Peer Teaching Evaluations**

For each greensheet review, the Chair will invite 2-3 faculty members to provide peer teaching evaluations. The candidate may confidentially identify faculty members who should not be invited for this purpose. Reasons must be provided beyond two exclusions.

All peer teaching evaluations will be done by qualified faculty. The Chair, in consultation with the candidate, may invite appropriate faculty members from other departments to provide peer teaching evaluations.

The peer evaluators are advised to look over the candidate's course materials as well as attend at least one of the candidate's lectures.

### **3.3 Advising**

Candidates preparing greensheets are advised to have a separate section on advising. In addition to student numbers, it is useful to include other information with regard to both undergraduate and graduate advising, such as

1. attempts to establish student contact,
2. frequency of meetings and other interactions with advisees,
3. inservice training for advising, and
4. efforts to support the Department in advising.

### **3.4 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 in this regard for their RPT reviews. All tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the Department are expected to actively engage in high-quality research, and their research activities are expected to be consistent with the Mission of the Department. Computer Science is an evolving discipline and is ever expanding in its reach and scope, and part of the Mission of the Department is to maintain a strong presence internationally at the research frontier in Computer Science, and to promote interdisciplinary (as well as multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary) research.

Publication of refereed articles in both journals and conferences is very important; in many areas of computer science, publication in top-tier conferences is 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. 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 Department does not simply count the publications and the grant money, nor does it take a restrictive, static view of what constitutes Computer Science research. The emphasis is on research quality.

For peer-reviewed journal publications, the candidate is advised to provide information regarding 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 (fully-refereed, abstract-refereed, 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 and evidence of research impact.

Collaborative, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary research is strongly encouraged. For joint publications, the candidate should describe their role in the joint effort. For all RPT reviews but the first tenure-track reappointment, the candidate will be asked to provide contact information for co-authors with whom the candidate has created or published joint work since the last RPT review. These co-authors will then be invited by the Chair to comment on their perception of the role of the candidate in their joint work. 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 Computer Science.

### **3.5 Selection of Arm's-Length Evaluators**

For the following tenure-track/tenured faculty RPT 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.

Also, 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.
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.

The Chair will provide the arm's-length reviewers with a dossier prepared by the candidate including all pertinent facts regarding the candidate, with access to the candidate's representative publications and other creative work, and will ask them for comments on

- the quality of the candidate's research,
- the candidate's research contributions to 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 arm's length evaluators:**

1. The candidate is asked to provide 10 nominations.
2. The Chair compiles 10 other names from other sources.

3. The Chair shows the 10 other names to the candidate and asks the candidate to identify (1) any names that are not at arm's-length, and (2) any names that the candidate deems inappropriate as evaluators (reasons must be provided beyond two exclusions). The Chair may repeat steps 2-3 in order to have a sufficient number of names.
4. The Chair selects and contacts 10 names from the combined list, with at least half from the candidate's list.

In extraordinary cases, exceptions to these guidelines may be worked out by the Chair with the candidate, and the Chair will document the reason for all adjustments.

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

### **3.6 Faculty Input and Eligible Voters for RPT Reviews**

#### **3.6.1 Faculty Input and Schedule for RPT Reviews**

The Chair should set an appropriate schedule for each RPT review, so that the completed 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 advice concerning the candidate with the Chair within a week. The feedback will be documented in the Chair's Evaluation.

At the beginning of the second week after the greensheets are complete, the Chair 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 3.6.2) to vote on whether or not to recommend the candidate's application. This vote will be recorded in the Chair's Evaluation.

After the above faculty feedback and eligible voters' vote, the Chair will decide whether or not to recommend the candidate's application, and will inform the candidate with a detailed Chair's Evaluation.

#### **3.6.2 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 tenure-track faculty who have successfully passed their first reappointment review are eligible voters.

- For a second reappointment review, only tenured faculty members and those tenure-track 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 Chair is not an eligible voter.

### **3.7 Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor**

#### **3.7.1 Mandatory vs. Non-Mandatory P&T Reviews**

- After 5 years' of service in a tenure-track position, a candidate for tenure and promotion will be notified by the Chair in the appropriate June that the review process must begin in the following academic year, and that the candidate is asked to nominate 10 arm's-length evaluators with a given deadline.
- A faculty member may become a candidate at an earlier date. In such a non-mandatory tenure case, the faculty member should let the Chair know by the appropriate May. The Chair may provide some informal advice after possible consultation with tenured members in the Department, but the decision for non-mandatory tenure application is with the candidate.
- The evaluation procedure is the same for both mandatory and non-mandatory tenure reviews. A candidate for tenure and promotion in either case is expected to be an established researcher in his/her research field, in addition to the university criteria given in the Union Contract.

#### **3.7.2 Withdrawal of Non-Mandatory Tenure Applications**

After the Chair's Evaluation in [Section 3.6.1](#), a non-mandatory tenure candidate may choose to withdraw the current tenure and promotion application.

### **3.8 Promotion to the Rank of Professor**

An Associate Professor who wishes to be considered for promotion to the rank of Professor should notify the Chair by the appropriate May so that arm's-length evaluators can be organized in the following summer.

Promotion to the rank of Professor requires a sustained record of excellence in teaching, research, and service, and the candidate should enjoy a recognized national or international reputation in his/her research field.

After the Chair's Evaluation in [Section 3.6.1](#), a candidate for promotion to Professor may choose to withdraw the current application.