Chapter 4
Tenure and Promotion

Board of Trustees Policy on Tenure and Promotion

The full text of the “Policy on Academic Freedom, Tenure and Retirement of the Board of Trustees of Tufts University” is available here. The following is a summary.

Eligibility for Tenure

To become eligible for tenure, an individual must fulfill the following criteria:

- Be serving the university as a full-time faculty member.
- Hold the unmodified rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor.

Probationary Period

The probationary period is seven years of full-time service. Normally, during the sixth year of the probationary period, a full-time, tenure-track faculty member either makes application for tenure review or formally withdraws from consideration in writing. If the university notifies the faculty member in writing by the end of the sixth year of the probationary period that tenure has not been awarded, the faculty member may serve a seventh year, which will be the terminal year of his/her contract. The School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering do not usually reduce the probationary period for a faculty member who has been employed in other institutions of higher education. Tenure-track faculty members, however, may request consideration for tenure before completing six years of full-time service at Tufts in a tenure-track position. A full year of unpaid leave counts as part of the probationary period leading to review for tenure, unless otherwise agreed upon at the time the leave is approved. The probationary period may be extended for a period not exceeding three years for a faculty member who at the time of employment did not have his or her Ph.D. or its equivalent, if the university and the faculty member agree in writing at the time of the initial employment to such an extension.

Under certain circumstances, tenure review may be deferred. See the “Policy on Automatic Tenure Review Deferral for Family Illness and Medical Leave” and the “Policy on Automatic Tenure Review Deferral for Parental Leave,” which appear elsewhere in the Handbook.

Faculty Committee on Tenure and Promotion

The Committee on Tenure and Promotion is composed of six tenured members of the Faculty of Arts, Sciences and Engineering elected by the faculty, and the provost ex officio without vote. When the committee has completed its deliberations, the chair communicates its recommendations to the school dean and to the candidate and his/her chair. Then the deans of the School of Arts and Sciences or the dean of the School of Engineering, in conjunction with the provost, consider the matter and send a recommendation to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. Ordinarily the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees considers tenure and promotion matters at the spring meeting, just prior to Commencement. The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees acts, and only then is tenure officially conferred. This action is
reported by the school dean and to the chair of the candidate’s department, who communicates it to the candidate.

The Committee on Tenure and Promotion periodically issues statements and reports that clarify the standards and procedures involved in evaluating faculty members for tenure and promotion. The majority of these statements are procedural in nature and have been superseded by more current statements from the committee. Statements 1 (issued in 1970 and revised in 1986 and 1989) and 12 (issued in 2005) are the most recently published documents and appear below, along with a link to the current version of Statement 11, which typically changes on an annual basis to accommodate changes in procedure. Copies of previous statements are available in the Office of the Provost from the Secretary of the Faculty.

**Statement 1 (1970; Revised 1989)**

The criteria for awards of tenure and/or promotion are in general terms familiar to all: quality of mind, creativity, scholarship, teaching effectiveness, and contributions to the university and the profession. The committee looks for evidence of excellence in all of these areas in every candidate, but does not apply a rigid formula.

We expect evidence of excellence in scholarship in all tenure and in all promotion cases. In tenure cases, clear promise of continued productive scholarship is particularly important. Cases involving promotion of previously tenured faculty should confirm that initial promise is being realized and that the candidate has achieved substantial professional recognition. The quality of scholarship is traditionally judged by one’s peers through published works. Papers read at meetings of learned societies, lectures to knowledgeable public groups, and participation in colloquia or panel discussions at one’s own or other universities may also be given consideration. Creative works—literary, artistic, engineering, and other professional—are further kinds of evidence for the judgment of quality of mind.

We look for excellent teaching and advising. Innovative teaching in all areas is valued. We hold that research is directly and indirectly related to quality and substance of teaching and believe that creative engagement in new developments within the field is essential. Among the criteria used are student evaluations, peer assessments, and other appropriate measures. Unless a teacher is renewed intellectually, a high quality of teaching cannot be maintained.

Participation in the academic community is also part of the normal expected responsibilities of a Tufts professor. The quality of this kind of activity constitutes part of an individual's credentials, as does the role an individual plays in the wider community. In the area of service, the committee does distinguish between tenure and promotion-only cases. In promotion-only cases, we expect a solid record and commitment to university and professional life. Our expectations are less in tenure cases, but we always look for demonstrated capacity to serve and quality of service.

**Statement 11, Application and Review Procedures for Tenure and Promotion**

[Statement 11, which changes regularly, can be found here.](#)
Statement 12 (March 30, 2005)

The general criteria for the award of tenure and promotion are well known and have not changed since the publication of Statement 1 (1970, revised 1989; see excerpts earlier in this chapter). Nevertheless the Tenure and Promotion Committee has found it useful to issue occasional clarifications. This is such a statement. It does not represent any change in policy.

The Committee reiterates that recommendations for tenure and promotion are based on an overall evaluation of the candidate’s scholarship, teaching, and service, with the long-term goal of steadily improving the quality of the faculty. We emphasize that there is no objective minimum standard of scholarly productivity that entitles a candidate to a positive recommendation, and that teaching and service are given serious consideration, as reaffirmed in Statement 8 (1981; see excerpt later in this chapter).

In evaluating teaching, the Committee welcomes evidence beyond the results of student evaluations, including examples of creative pedagogy, supervision of students in individual research, evidence of dedication to and enthusiasm for teaching, and comments from fellow faculty who are familiar with the candidate’s teaching.

In evaluating scholarship, the Committee looks for evidence of a history and promise of consistent, independent, and significant scholarly accomplishment. It is helpful if the candidate’s application and the department’s subsequent statement provide explicit evidence of such accomplishment, with attention to such issues as:

- Scholarly works in relation to time. While the totality of the candidate’s scholarly works will be considered, the period of primary interest will usually be the time since appointment to Tufts University or last promotion at Tufts University. For lateral hires or promotion cases soon after tenure, consideration of works over a longer period may be more appropriate. Periods during which the tenure clock is stopped will not be included.

- Forms of scholarship. Disciplines vary in their expectations regarding forms of scholarly output (e.g. books, journal articles, translations, artistic works). In all cases the department’s statement should clarify those expectations.

- Evidence of scholarly contributions distinct from those of mentors and collaborators. In many fields collaboration is highly valued and frequently indispensable, and the ability to establish fruitful collaborations with excellent colleagues is viewed positively. In such cases, however, it is important that the individual contributions of the candidate be clearly explained and demonstrated.

- Significant contributions to the candidate’s field of study. The letters solicited from outside referees provide an indispensable measure of the candidate’s scholarly impact. It is therefore of the greatest importance that letters be obtained from a cross section of distinguished colleagues in the candidate’s field. It is equally important that the letters provide as informed and independent an evaluation of the candidate as possible.

- The following is the excerpt from Statement 8 (issued 1981), referenced above: “Another rumor which we would like to put to rest is that teaching and service do not, in fact, count. One may argue in some cases that they do not count for much, but the fact is that they do, in some cases, count for a great deal. Service is, perhaps, seldom decisive and scholarship is,
clearly, often decisive, but we feel you do your younger colleagues a disservice if you oversimplify our criteria....”

Policy on Automatic Tenure Review Deferral for Family Illness Leave and Medical Leave

As of September 1, 2013, tenure review for tenure-track faculty members will be automatically deferred for one year due to either a family illness leave of twelve weeks or longer, or a medical leave of twelve weeks or longer. If the leave is to take place in the academic year preceding the tenure review, faculty members must submit the application for family illness or medical leave by May 1 of that year. Faculty members will receive up to two automatic tenure deferrals for family illness and/or medical leaves, and may request additional deferrals, to be granted at the discretion of the dean. Faculty members may also request tenure review deferrals for family illness/medical leaves of less than twelve weeks, to be granted at the discretion of the dean. A faculty member may opt out of this year of tenure review deferral, or may simply later decide to come up early for tenure review.

Policy on Automatic Tenure Review Deferral for Parental Leave

As of September 1, 2013, tenure review for tenure-track faculty members will be automatically deferred for one year due to the birth, adoption, or placement of a child for whom they are the primary caregiver. In order to implement this automatic deferral, a faculty member must declare that he/she is the primary caregiver, and must take a parental leave. The faculty member must submit the Nonacademic Leave Request Form, including the Primary Caregiver Affidavit for Paid Faculty Parental Leave form, within three months of the birth, adoption, or placement of the child. If the leave is to take place in the academic year preceding the tenure review, faculty members must submit the application for parental leave by May 1 of that year. Faculty members will receive up to two automatic tenure deferrals for parental leaves, and may request additional deferrals, to be granted at the discretion of the dean. A faculty member may opt out of this year of tenure review deferral, or may simply later decide to come up early for tenure review.