

What happens to my tenure & promotion packet?

In general, most universities have a six-year probationary period for assistant professors to build their T&P portfolio. However, in reality your portfolio (packet/materials/documentation) will be required to be turned in for review in the early fall semester of your sixth year (this gives you five years to get your material together). I remember thinking to myself when I got everything turned in to my Chair, “Well, now what?”

While every university will have its own policies and procedures, here’s an example of what generally happens at Texas State.

1. Eligibility for tenure / Eligibility for promotion > MUST NOTIFY CHAIR BY JUNE 1 (end of fifth year) in writing (email is fine).
2. Typically at the BEGINNING of the sixth contract year the T/P packet goes forward documenting last five years of activity (transfer of prior years?)
3. Early tenure may be considered “without prejudice” prior to the sixth year if the record is *outstanding*. However, early tenure is extremely rare, and consultation with leadership should occur first.
4. Full-time prior university teaching may have been added to years of eligibility — this should have been discussed prior to hiring as part of the contractual agreement.
5. Know the academic year you are expected to submit T/P documentation.
6. Suspending tenure clock – extenuating circumstances (e.g. pregnancy, family death, etc.)
7. Review college T/P policy (found on college webpage under the “College Policy and Procedures” tab).
8. Review departmental T/P policy.
9. Make a “checklist” of elements detailed in the university/college/unit policies for scholarly/creative activities.
10. Pay close attention to calendars/timelines.
11. Find a tenure/promotion mentor in your unit if your chair does not assign one (or another unit?)
12. Ask for guidance regarding T/P notebook (*TK20 e-portfolio on the horizon*) format preferred by your unit. (Ask if you can glance at an example of an excellent, recently submitted packet.)
 - In my college, we produce four binders (one each for teaching, scholarship, service and one smaller binder for an executive summary/tracking documents)
 - Colleges have varying requirements, but in general:
 - **Teaching** – peer evaluations, student evaluations, course syllabi, other teaching documentation, student letters of support, etc.
 - **Scholarship** – peer reviewed articles, chapters, “works”, etc.
 - **Service** – service documents, commendation letters, etc.
 - **Executive summary** – official university cv, teaching philosophy, scholarship philosophy, service philosophy, external review letters and other letters of support, required university tracking documents
13. Attend all meetings hosted by your dean and chair regarding tenure-track process—stay informed of any changes in requirements (as upper administration changes or interpretive changes).
14. Begin to consider two colleagues outside the university you can recommend as external reviewers – new T&P guidelines require a minimum of two external reviewers
15. Understanding the process of tenure/promotion at the Three Levels:
 - Program/Department/School Level** (T/P packet due by October 1st)
 - Review by Personnel Committee — recommends to Chair
 - PC reviews packet (in light of unit/department T/P requirements and makes comments and adds letter
 - Review by Chair —recommends to Dean

- Chair makes comments from PC and self

College Level

- Review by College Review Group—recommends to Dean
 - CRG made up of Chairs from each unit (department) and one unit representative and two external members from other university colleges, CRG is chaired by the Dean (Dean does not vote)
 - Prior to CRG, each CRG member reviews all packets for T/P
 - During CRG meeting, each packet is discussed and an anonymous vote is conducted
 - Two appointed (by Dean) members of CRG tally votes and a record is made of vote count
 - Majority vote by CRG equals approval (in other words, if there are 16 CRG members, a vote of at least 9-7 is a recommendation for approval)
- Review by Dean—recommends to Provost/president
 - Dean makes comments from PC, Chair, CRG and self as part of tracking documents to go forward to Provost

University Level

- Review by Provost—recommends to President
 - Only candidates tracking documents and letters go forward, Packets remain in college and “may” be called up for review by Provost/President if requested
 - Review by President—recommends to Board of Regents
16. Each group at each level votes.
 17. T/P packets move forward with at least *one* “approve for tenure” vote (e.g., at the PC and Chair level, if the PC votes “approve” but the chair does not, the packet still moves forward. The same at the CRG/Dean level and onward. The same extends at the CRG and Dean level, and the Provost/President level.
 18. T/P packets stops with *two* “do not approve for tenure” votes at any level.
 19. University PPS 8.08, Faculty Grievance Policy, provides faculty grievance procedures for violation of due process in termination of tenured/non-tenured faculty.
 20. The timeline for the entire process typically extends in to the summer of the sixth year. The candidates are told of the decision in mid to late summer with official status the next academic year. T/P is announced formally by email to the university and recognized at the Fall Convocation.
 21. Once T/P is achieved, the faculty member may work towards “full” professor promotion after 10 years of employment, including the six at assistant professor level. Generally, associate professors are strongly encouraged to continue in their research endeavors to reach “national” recognition, while maintaining strong teaching and more “leadership” at the service level.

Academic Affairs Policies* listed at <http://www.provost.txstate.edu/pps.html>

- Review PPS 8.01 for Development/Evaluation of Tenure-Track Faculty
- Provides guides and requirements during First, Second, Third, Fourth & Fifth, and Sixth-Year Review process
- The responsibilities of your Chair/Director, Personnel Committee and department mentor are outlined
- Review PPS 8.10 for Tenure and Promotion Review – Always be on the lookout for *updates*.

*These policies are “living documents” that are reviewed and updated on a regular basis at my institution. Likewise, each institution will have its own process.

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