

THIRD-YEAR REVIEW AT TANDON SCHOOL OF NYU

October 28, 2015

1 Introduction

These Guidelines for Third-Year Review of Assistant Professors at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering (“School of Engineering”) are circulated annually to all Department Chairs as well as to all full-time faculty members in their first, second, and third year of probationary service in the School of Engineering.

The President and Board of Trustees have mandated a formal performance review of tenure-track Assistant Professors in their third year of service at New York University to determine whether Assistant Professors should be allowed to continue their progress toward tenure, and if so, what advice they should be given about strengthening their records.

The Third-Year Review will be included in the dossier of all School of Engineering tenure candidates, and standards for tenure at the School of Engineering should be kept in mind in framing the report. The Third-Year Review should therefore take into account that standards for the award of tenure are extremely rigorous, and that they set particular importance on high scholarly accomplishment. If the department has any doubts about the potential of a junior person to become a published scholar of national prominence at a later stage in his or her career, its doubts should be clearly outlined in the review.

If such doubts are serious, the department and/or the School of Engineering Tenure and Promotions Committee should not recommend reappointment, since the overwhelming likelihood is that reappointment would simply result in an even more painful and professionally costly negative decision at the time of a subsequent tenure review. In the event of reappointment, any reservations must ultimately be shared in writing and in person with the probationary colleague, so that he or she may be under no misunderstanding over the likelihood of tenure being awarded. If reappointment is not offered as a result of the Third-Year Review, the faculty member being reviewed will be given terminal employment for one academic year beyond the year in which the review took place.

To comply with this policy, the department must examine the performance of Third-Year Assistant Professors, and the Department Chair must communicate the substance of that review to the Dean of the School of Engineering with a recommendation for reappointment or termination. For an Assistant Professor whose appointment began at the start of a fall semester, the recommendation must reach the Dean by the first weekday in the third March after the initial appointment. For an Assistant Professor whose appointment began at the start of a spring semester, the recommendation must reach the Dean by the first weekday in the third September that occurs after the initial appointment. The Department report and recommendation are then reviewed by the School of Engineering Tenure and Promotions Committee (“TPC”). If the report is delivered to the Dean in March, then the TPC will deliver its advice to the Dean by no later than the first weekday in May. If the report is delivered to the Dean in September, then the TPC will deliver its advice to the Dean by no later than the first weekday in November. Any questions regarding the review procedures should be directed to the office of the Dean.

2 Guidelines and Procedures

- 1) All Assistant Professors in their third year of service must be reviewed by the Department, the School of Engineering TPC, and the Dean. An exception is the case of an Assistant Professor who has a prior written agreement specifying review for tenure and for promotion before the end of the third year of the appointment. Such an agreement must be specific. A copy of any such prior agreement must be submitted to the Office of the Dean within two weeks of receiving this notice.
- 2) The department review is to be undertaken by the Department Chair and a departmental committee consisting of three tenured professors, or a committee of all tenured professors in the department, or, if there are fewer than three tenured members of the department, an ad-hoc committee of three tenured School of Engineering faculty named by the Dean. The review must include an assessment of the quality of the Assistant Professor's scholarship and research, both published and unpublished, obtained through critical evaluation by at least two senior members of the department.

The review may be written by the Department Chair or a member of the committee, but all members of the committee should read the review before it is submitted to the department. The review should represent a collective judgment of the committee or, in the case of a divided opinion, a majority of the committee. If there is a division, the dissenting opinion should be appended to the majority review.

- 3) In the case of a review undertaken by a subcommittee of all tenured members of the department, the review must be presented to and discussed by the full tenured faculty. The committee's review should be made available to tenured members of the department in advance of a meeting at which all tenured faculty discuss the report. Tenured faculty members in the department may propose amendments to the report. The tenured faculty will vote by secret ballot on each case, and the vote will be provided in the written report by the Department Chair.
- 4) In the case of appointments between two departments or a department and a program, both units must participate in the review.
- 5) The Department Chair must then communicate through a written report to the School of Engineering Dean the recommendation of the committee as well as his or her own recommendation. The report of the committee should include the following materials, most of which have been submitted to the committee by the candidate:
 - An up-to-date curriculum vitae of the Assistant Professor, including a list of all courses taught, all committee service, all publications, papers, and activities at conferences, etc., and a list of all grant and fellowship proposals submitted with a notation as to which proposals have been funded, indicating amounts requested and received.
 - A three-page statement by the Assistant Professor assessing his or her academic career and professional goals.
 - An evaluation of teaching performance that includes a judgment of the quality of syllabi and of classroom performance.
 - A copy of the departmental committee review (from item 2 above).
 - An assessment of the quality of the Assistant Professor's scholarship and research, both published and unpublished, obtained through critical review by at least two senior members of the department.
 - A Department Chair's letter that must characterize the tenor of the full departmental discussion, indicating any areas of concern and of possible dissent. If the sense of the department discussion was that of unanimous support for the review, the Department

- Chair should so indicate. In the case of a negative recommendation, the department vote (yes, no, abstained) must also be indicated.
- A clear statement of the candidate's progress toward tenure and recommendation as to reappointment after the fourth year.
 - A report summary letter, signed by both the Department Chair and the candidate, should be forwarded to the Dean (see items 7 and 8 below).
- 6) In some instances, the department may also wish to request outside evaluations from recognized experts in the candidate's field. While such evaluations are not required, they may well prove valuable, particularly in cases in which the progress of the Assistant Professor's scholarship is in serious question.
- 7) A summary of the report, in the form of a letter of advice characterizing its reception by the tenured faculty, must be given to the candidate and discussed with him or her by the Department Chair. The candidate must sign the letter to indicate that he or she has read it and discussed it with the Department Chair. This summary must cover both strengths and weaknesses of the candidate's performance to that time.
- 8) The summary letter must include the following:
- "This is a letter of advice; regardless of the merits for reappointment at this time, it does not constitute a guarantee of tenure."
 - "Tenure standards are continually rising and, per established guidelines, candidates will be judged by those standards in effect at the time of their tenure review."
 - "I have read this letter of advice and understand its contents."
 - Signature and date block for the candidate
- 9) The Dean will acknowledge receipt of the Third-Year Review and deliver it immediately to the School of Engineering TPC. The TPC will review the full department report and recommendation. In some instances, the TPC may also wish to request outside evaluations from recognized experts in the candidate's field. While such evaluations are not required, they may well prove valuable, particularly in cases in which the progress of the Assistant Professor's scholarship is in serious question. The TPC will write its own letter evaluating the candidate's performance and progress and advising the Dean.
- 10) After receiving the TPC report and advice, the Dean will communicate his or her decision regarding reappointment or termination directly to the Department Chair and the candidate. In the case of a Dean's recommendation contrary to that of the department, the Dean will provide the Department Chair with the reasons prior to contacting the candidate. The Department Chair will then have ten days in which to provide further information or counter-argument.
- 11) **Submission Deadlines**
For faculty hired as of the start of the fall semester in Year 1, the report of the department committee and Department Chair's recommendation to the Dean are due no later than the first weekday of March in Year 3, and the report of the TPC is due no later than the first weekday of May in Year 3. For faculty hired as of the start of the spring semester in Year 1, the department report and recommendation are due no later than the first weekday in September of Year 4 and the report of the TPC is due no later than the first weekday in November of Year 4.