Introduction: Campus Policy

The purpose of the **Annual Review** is for senior faculty to evaluate the progress of other faculty members towards tenure and/or promotion to a higher rank. The University of Missouri-St. Louis Tenure and Promotion Procedures state the following (section II.A.1):

> All untenured regular faculty shall be reviewed annually regarding their progress toward tenure in light of the Unit Standards. The appropriate Unit Committee will conduct this review. Faculty under review shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Unit Committee and to submit material that she or he believes should be reviewed by the Committee. A written report, prepared by the Unit Committee or the Unit Chair, shall be given to the faculty member and the Dean.

In addition, it is stated that every tenure-track faculty member will receive a more thorough review at the midpoint of his or her probationary period (section III.A.2):

> A comprehensive performance review of all tenure-track faculty shall be conducted at the midpoint of their probationary period at UM-St. Louis. The Unit Committee, consisting of all qualified faculty members (i.e., those holding tenure and, in cases involving promotion, rank higher than the individual under review), shall conduct this review. Faculty under review shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Unit Committee and to submit material that she or he believes should be reviewed by the Committee. Upon completion of the review, a written summary of the conclusions and recommendations reached by the committee shall be provided to the faculty member, the Unit Chair, and the Dean. The report shall include one of the following possible outcomes:

  a. The faculty member is making satisfactory progress toward tenure and sustained progress may result in a favorable recommendation from the unit;
  
  b. There are deficiencies that, if satisfactorily corrected, may lead to a favorable recommendation for tenure, or;
  
  c. The faculty member has not met the stated requirements for the position in one or more areas of responsibility, and the Unit Committee recommends against further contract renewals.

At UMSL, since the standard probationary period is six years, the midpoint review should take place in the third year, and will therefore be called the **Third-Year Review** in this document.
Faculty who have already achieved tenure as an Assistant or Associate Professor should also be reviewed annually for their progress toward promotion to the next higher rank (section III.A.3):

All tenured Assistant and Associate Professors should be reviewed annually regarding their progress toward promotion. The appropriate Unit Committee will conduct this review. Faculty under review shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Unit Committee and to submit material that she or he believes should be reviewed by the Committee. A written report, prepared by the Unit Committee or the Unit Chair, shall be given to the faculty member and the Dean.

(Note: it is no longer the campus practice to grant tenure without promotion to an Assistant Professor; however, there may be individual faculty members who already hold the rank of tenured Assistant Professor, and these individuals should be reviewed according to the campus policy stated above.)

**Timetable**

**Annual Reviews** of progress toward promotion should be conducted early in the spring semester each year. The deadline for submitting materials for the Annual Review should be several weeks before the date when the departmental recommendation for promotion is due to the Dean, usually in mid-March. It is important to allow sufficient time for the Unit Committee to review the materials carefully and meet for their deliberations, since the report must reflect the consensus opinion of the Unit Committee, and not solely the opinion of the committee chair, even if that person is charged with compiling the report.

**Important Note:** the Annual Review process is separate from the mandated annual faculty performance evaluation, the purpose of which is to assess the faculty member’s performance only during the preceding 12-month period. That process is typically conducted by the department chair, in some cases with the assistance of a designated faculty committee, but not with participation of all faculty of higher rank. That process is also conducted later in the semester, after faculty have submitted reports of their activities for the period of April 1 – March 31.

The comprehensive **Third-Year Review** described above is normally conducted in the spring of the third year of a tenure-track appointment, at the same time as other faculty Annual Reviews. For faculty who are hired with a shorter probationary period, the comprehensive review may take place earlier, e.g., in the second year of a four-year probationary period. (For a probationary period of five years, the midpoint should be considered as the third year, in order to benefit the candidate.) If a probationary period is shorter than four years, the department chair should consult with the Dean to determine if a mid-point comprehensive review is required.

While the process of a Third-Year Review is similar to the Annual Review for promotion and tenure, it is broader in scope and has more significant consequences, i.e., potential non-
renewal of contract. The faculty member should therefore be given notice in the preceding fall semester, so that he or she will have sufficient time to prepare a Factual Record and supporting materials to submit in the spring.

Materials Reviewed

It is strongly advised that all Annual Reviews for promotion be based upon a Factual Record, following the University Tenure and Promotion Guidelines (Appendix 1). Since this is the mandatory format for the presentation of the candidate’s accomplishments in a dossier for tenure and/or promotion, it is logical and efficient for tenure-track faculty members to create this document in their first year of employment, adding to it over time. In this way, both the faculty member and the department unit committee are able to assess how the candidate’s record compares with the expectations of performance itemized in the Factual Record outline.

The Factual Record differs from an annual performance evaluation report in that it does not cover only the accomplishments of the preceding year, but instead should cover all relevant career accomplishments to date. This includes teaching, research, and significant professional service carried out before the individual was hired in the current position.

In addition to the Factual Record, the Third-Year Review may be based upon additional materials provided by the candidate or by departmental records. These may include, but are not limited to: copies of publications; evidence of acceptance of publications, exhibition of creative works, or papers to be presented at scholarly conferences; evaluations of external grant submissions; peer evaluations of departmental research presentations; student evaluations (to be provided by the department, not by the candidate); peer observations of teaching. Letters from external reviewers in regard to research or service are not normally included as part of this process.

Committee Report

The outcome of the Annual Review is “a written summary of the conclusions and recommendations reached by the committee.” It should be compiled by the unit committee chair, based upon the discussions of the committee, and a draft should be circulated to all members of the committee for their approval, before the report is officially sent to the faculty member and to the Dean.

The Annual Review report should be an objective assessment of the faculty member’s progress toward promotion and tenure. It should acknowledge the faculty member’s specific accomplishments, using language that is descriptive and evaluative (e.g., “an article of substantial length in a top-tier journal”) but not subjective or vague (“a great contribution,” “your service is fine”). It should also avoid language that appears to predict the outcome of the future tenure decision, either positively or negatively. (An exception is a negative Third-Year Review Report, described above in the Tenure and Promotion Procedures, III.A.2.c.)
In regard to the format of the report, it should begin by identifying all members of the Unit Committee who participated in the discussion. It should then have a minimum of one paragraph to address each category of accomplishment, i.e., teaching, research, and service. Positive accomplishments should be recognized, but the letter should also state where the record needs improvement. It may be helpful for the Committee to consult the categories listed in the outline for the Factual Record (campus Guidelines, Appendix 1), as a reminder of which ones may need more attention. If a noteworthy accomplishment does not fall clearly under a category listed in the Guidelines, it should still be acknowledged, in the paragraph considered most appropriate by the Unit Committee (teaching, research, or service).

In stating expectations for improvement, it is advisable to use language such as: “The case for promotion would be strengthened by ... [additional refereed publications in national or international journals/contribution to service at the college or campus level/developing and teaching a new course/etc.]” This serves to inform the candidate of areas in which he or she should attempt to direct future efforts, without stating that such activity is an absolute requirement for a positive tenure recommendation, or implying that if that requirement is met, tenure or promotion will be guaranteed.

Not every candidate will have an outstanding record in every potential category of accomplishment, but no candidate should be encouraged to disregard certain categories as being unimportant. Similarly, the committee report should take seriously every category in which the faculty member has a performance expectation, and give it appropriate weight (normally 40% teaching, 40% research, 20% service).

The Third-Year Review report should be more detailed than a routine Annual Review report, and must include the additional recommendation as described above in the Tenure and Promotion Procedures, III.A.2.a, b, or c.

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