

**College of Arts and Sciences**  
**University at Albany**  
**Guidelines for Conducting Pre-Tenure Faculty Contract Renewals**

Pre-tenure faculty contract renewals should be viewed as a timely and important opportunity to review a junior faculty member's progress toward tenure and promotion. In most instances, tenure renewals, based on a 3-2-2 contract term renewal schedule, will take place in the second and fourth years of employment. The first 3-year term appointment is specified in the original offer letter. The first renewal, in addition to evaluating the individual's scholarly, teaching, and service activities, is also an opportunity to discuss resources available to faculty members (e.g. Drescher Award, if applicable, services of the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership). The second term renewal comes at a critical juncture, as the individual has had sufficient time to progress toward the requirements of tenure and promotion and deficiencies in the candidate's file should be apparent by this time. At this point the individual should be advised of specific deficiencies that should be addressed prior to the tenure and promotion review. The following guidelines have been developed to assist the Departments in establishing a process for term renewals that will best serve all parties.

**Philosophy:**

Emulate in the contract renewal process as much as possible the procedures undertaken in promotion and tenure, short of sending out materials to external reviewers and soliciting letters of support. University at Albany guidelines for promotion and tenure can be found at:

[http://www.albany.edu/academic\\_affairs/policies\\_guidelines/continuing.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/academic_affairs/policies_guidelines/continuing.shtml)

**Materials Required:**

- Curriculum Vitae – prepared in accordance with guidelines for promotion and tenure
- Personal Statement – regarding research, teaching philosophy, and service (required for tenure review and suggested by the second term review)
- Teaching Materials
  - ✓ Collection of course syllabi
  - ✓ Course evaluations - quantitative scores (SIRF scores when available) and qualitative comments (It is important to include the quantitative scores for all classes taught.) Be sure to include enrollment numbers.
  - ✓ Grade distributions
  - ✓ One or more in-class visits
- Copies of publications, manuscripts under review, selected conference papers, and/or evidence of creative activity
- The Department Chair must send to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences a recommendation regarding the renewal of faculty contracts for each tenure-track faculty member. As a part of this recommendation, the Chair is asked to describe to the Dean “the method by which the Chair consulted with the faculty in the candidate's academic unit.” The faculty member's CV, HRM-3, SIRF data, grade distributions, and course enrollments should accompany the recommendation.

**Procedures for Gathering Information and Deliberation:**

- Faculty member to supply CV, personal statements, and publications, etc.
- Department Office to provide syllabi and teaching evaluations
- In-class observation and report to be organized by faculty mentor or the Chair
- Faculty discussion of the term renewal according to Department bylaws or customs
- Faculty mentor to provide other relevant information, if any

**Questions for Faculty Discussion and Deliberation:**

- Whether to renew contract?
- If so, then what information might be provided to the faculty member to guide continuing efforts toward promotion and tenure?

**Feedback to candidate:**

- Candidate converses with Chair regarding feedback from the faculty discussion
- Candidate receives a copy of the letter from Department Chair to the CAS Dean

**Assessing progress in the future:**

Between contract renewals, the Chair will have an informal conversation annually with each tenure track faculty member and his/her mentor about progress toward tenure. The discussion will be based on a consideration of CV and teaching evaluations. This discussion should generally take place at the end of each academic year, although accommodations may be made to address the circumstances of particular faculty members. Should the Chair have concerns that tenure or the next contract renewal is in jeopardy, the Chair may convene the tenure-track faculty to conduct an informal review of a faculty member's progress toward tenure. When appropriate, proper documentation of these discussions should be prepared for the file.

**Scholarship:**

*Issues Relevant to an Assessment of Scholarship and Creative Activity (in no particular order)*

- Rate of publication or performances/exhibits/recordings, etc.
- Quality of publications (journals, press) and/or performances/exhibits/recordings, etc. and venues
- Authorship and collaboration – single, multiple
- External funding, received or seeking
- The issue of focus in scholarly or creative activity
- Future research/creative agenda, evidence of work beyond the dissertation
- Visibility in the field/associations/public

*Scholarship Question:* Is the candidate making adequate progress toward tenure and promotion from the perspective of the dimensions listed above and criteria of the Department?

**Teaching:**

*Issues Relevant to an Assessment of Teaching (in no particular order):*

- Mastery of subject
- Lectures well organized and clear
- Syllabi and course materials complete
- Teaching evaluations (compare favorably with Department, on upward trajectory)
- Use of technology, if relevant

*Teaching Question:* Is the candidate making adequate progress toward achieving excellence in teaching?

**Service:**

*Issues Relevant to an Assessment of Service (in no particular order):*

- Appropriate service to the Department, College, University
- Evidence that candidate is a good University citizen
- Service to the profession

*Service Question:* Is the candidate making service contributions appropriate to his or her rank? Generally speaking, service contributions of the most junior faculty should not be too heavy and should include participation in Departmental activities. More time-intensive commitments, such as chairing a committee, should, when possible, be the responsibility of more senior faculty.