

Administering the APT Process

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UNIVERSITY OF
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THE OFFICE OF FACULTY AFFAIRS

Agenda

1. General Considerations
2. Process
3. Updates (COVID and APT Guidelines)
4. Expectations of APT Committees, Chairs, Deans
5. What We See/What Can Happen

Tenure is

- Earned based on demonstrated **excellence** in research/scholarship/creative work, teaching and mentoring, **and** service (and Extension, if applicable)
- Granted by an academic institution to those who demonstrate a **capacity for a lifetime** of scholarship, teaching, and service (and Extension, if applicable)
- Judgement: trajectory based on past performance

Promotion is

- A recognition of **continued excellence** in research, teaching and mentoring, and service (and Extension, if applicable)
- A recognition of significant accomplishments since tenure
 - While the whole record is presented, ***emphasis is on activities since tenure***
- A recognition of impact/standing
 - E.g., international reputation; impact of work on field, practice, policy, other

Promotion/Tenure

- Is not about “getting over the line”
 - Expectations for future accomplishments and continued performance

Defining and Demonstrating Excellence

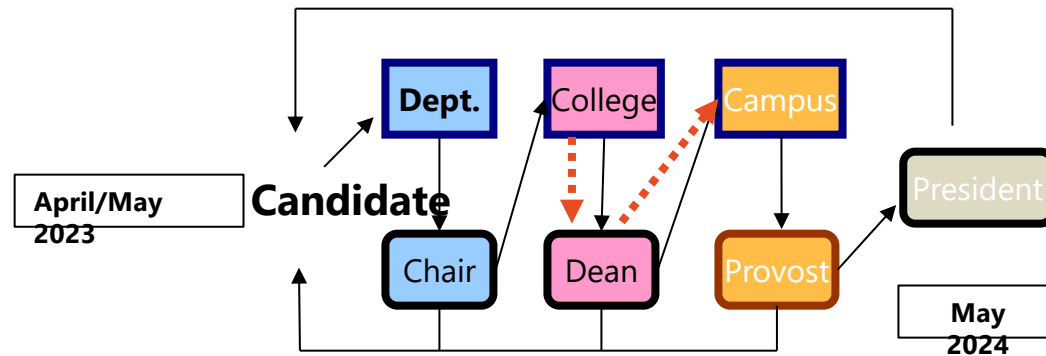
- Units are the experts in their field/subfield(s)
 - Units establish the criteria for excellence in that field/subfield(s), answering the question:
 - What does excellence in...
 - Research/scholarship/creative work
 - Teaching and mentoring
 - Service
 - [Extension]
- Look like in your field/subfield(s)?
- How is excellence measured?
- You and your colleagues are responsible for **articulating** and **demonstrating** how candidates have achieved “excellence”
 - Crucial to do so
 - Upper levels are not a “rubber stamp”
 - What is obvious to you may not be at upper levels
 - Often unit criteria are vague
 - Especially important for collaborative work



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The APT process is a year-long process



- Departmentalized colleges have 3 levels of review (department, college, campus)
- Non-departmentalized colleges have 2 levels of review (college, campus)
- Two campus committees (tenure, promotion) constituted by the Provost



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The COVID Intervention

- The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been significant and disparate
 - Some faculty have had their careers accelerated due to the pandemic
 - Some have pursued new lines of inquiry only made possible due to the pandemic
 - Others have faced personal and/or professional challenges that have altered their progress and anticipated trajectory, likely for quite some time



The COVID Intervention

- Our inferences about a candidate's potential could be based on different, or less, information than in the past
- Our traditional milestones and markers may not fully reflect a faculty member's potential contributions
- Units will need to exercise judgment in assessing faculty performance and trajectory, balancing unit criteria and the personal and professional impacts of the pandemic faced by their faculty members

COVID Updates to APT Process

- Summarized at <https://faculty.umd.edu/resources/covid-guidance>
 - Candidate COVID Impact Statement [Guidance](#)
 - Field Impact Statement [Guidance](#)
 - Unit Head and Promotion and Review Committee [Guidance](#)
 - University COVID-19 Actions [Timeline](#)
 - Modifications to External Letter Request
- Anticipated in effect until AY2026-2027
- In addition, there is the COVID tenure delay (<https://faculty.umd.edu/covid-19-tenure-delay>)
 - Available through June 1, 2026

COVID Updates to APT Process

- **Internal**

- Candidate COVID Impact Statement
- Field Impact Statement
- [Unit Head and Promotion and Review Committee Guidance]

- **External**

- Modifications to External Letter Request
- University COVID-19 Actions Timeline



Updates to APT Guidelines (April 2022)

<https://faculty.umd.edu/apt-manual>

- Updated candidate certification template (to include Field Impact Statement)
- Clarification on the purpose and use of minority reports
- Guidance on identifying and articulating the impact of candidates whose scholarly and creative activities are largely or exclusively collaborative

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You Need to Know

- USM Policy
- UMD [Policy](#) and [Guidelines](#)
 - Changes to APT Guidelines
 - COVID-related changes
- Unit Criteria
 - Secondary unit if joint appointment
 - Modified tenure criteria, if applicable
- Process
 - Department
 - College
 - Campus
- Culture – unit, college, University



The APT Committees

- Seek to understand **the candidate** and their work in **your unit**
- The most important thing a dossier does is **tell a story**, in particular the candidate's story
- It is a narrative with several layers and parts*
 - Told by 3 different committees (Department, College, Campus) and 3 different university officers (Chair, Dean, Provost)
 - The goal and hope is that the compilation does justice to the case
 - [Ultimately, it is the President who has the most information in the decision to grant tenure]

* There may be more layers if there is a joint appointment

Committees, APT Chairs, Chairs

- Lower level committees (Department) emphasize
 - Field and departmental expectations (metrics, criteria, definitions of excellence)
 - Field and department assessments and evaluation
 - Technical aspects of a case (reports, letters, external evaluator selection criteria)
- Higher level committees (College, University) focus on a professional evaluation of quality and impact indicators, as well as process
 - By the department (guided by written criteria)
 - By **external evaluators**

Committees, APT Chairs, Chairs

- Administrators should ensure:
 - A clear, accurate, and concise presentation in the dossier
 - Departmental, College, and University processes are followed
 - Established criteria are applied
 - Clear articulation of the quality, impact, and contributions of candidates
- General rule: avoid non-conventional practices and expectations (i.e., non-standard evaluator letter)
 - These can and often do cause potential harm to candidates
- When in doubt, call OFA

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What We See

- The use of non-standard/**required** external letter request
 - **If modified, need to have reviewed and approved by OFA**
 - ***Should also discuss with the Dean if in a departmentalized college***
- Discussion of personnel matters irrelevant to the deliberations (and in some cases that should be handled through other processes/policies that ensure due process for all parties)
- Inappropriate communication with candidates about their cases during the APT process
- Different processes for different candidates seeking promotion/tenure in the same unit at the same time (typically due to different procedures adopted by record preparation committees/subcommittees)

What We See

- Missing elements to dossiers
 - Mis-ordered elements of the dossier
- Faculty conducting additional research (e.g., citation analysis, google scholar) and basing their assessments on materials not included in the dossier
- Different data (i.e., publication counts) in different parts of the dossier (Summary Statement of Achievements, Committee Reports)
- Different vote counts (in Committee Reports and on the transmittal form)

What We See

- Not providing the candidate the requisite time to review and sign off on materials – or not providing them to candidates at all
- Personal statements that are (way) too long (5 page max)
- **We urge you to adopt a thorough review process to ensure the dossier's accuracy**
 - Not doing so can cause delays at the campus level while we sort all this out

What We See

- Increasing number of co-authored/large scale team publications
 - It is essential that the ***candidate's*** contributions to the research efforts and impact are clearly articulated
 - We tenure/promote candidates, not teams
- “Weaponized” minority reports
 - These are not intended for airing unit disputes
 - Misuse harms candidates as well as unit reputation

Please...

- Familiarize yourself with the standard dossier ahead of time
- Review the guidelines – they have been updated in a number of key areas
- Make sure you are using the latest external letter requests
 - Do not simply pull up one that was used before
- **Don't send forward problematic dossiers** (procedure, due process)
 - If you think there is a problem, other levels will too
 - Don't be afraid to ask questions of lower levels or even send dossier back
 - If you don't, others may, causing delays and other issues

Please...

- **Quality control**

- Someone needs to ensure that the dossiers get to us
 - On time
 - Clean
 - Review ready

Things To Think About

- **COVID – how are units going to contextualize candidate records vis-à-vis their criteria?**
 - Please review our guidance
 - Please discuss as a faculty/APT committee how unit will address COVID contextualization (informed by University guidance) before the reviews begin
- Set and manage candidate expectations – this is a year long process (April/May 2023 to May 2024)
- Fields are evolving
 - Quality/impact measures are changing
 - More co-authorship
 - How do changes affect your candidates vis-à-vis your unit's criteria?
- Is it time to review your APT criteria?
 - Your criteria may be out of step with your faculty going up for promotion/tenure in the coming years

Things To Think About

- Are colleges and departments “in synch” with expectations?
 - Increased number of cases in which departments and colleges are in disagreement
 - This forces the Campus committee and Provost to resolve the disagreement

What We Can (and will) Do

- Ask questions of lower levels
- Bring unit representatives forward to Campus APT Committee
- **Send dossiers back for reconsideration**
- [Appeals]
 - Some of the issues we see are either procedural or due process violations – and appealable should there be a negative decision by the President



Parting Comments

- Additional issues
 - Open Access publications
 - “Predatory” journals and conferences
 - <https://libguides.ucd.ie/publishing/predatory>
 - <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>

In Conclusion

- Communicate with
 - Faculty Affairs
 - Unit staff preparing dossiers for transmission
 - Others as necessaryto ensure that all runs smoothly
- When in doubt, ask OFA

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