

# **Department of Physics North Dakota State University**

## **Procedures and Criteria for Promotion, Tenure, and Evaluation**

Last Update: August 29, 2025

### **1 Preamble**

This document describes the procedures and criteria for promotion, tenure, and evaluation in the Department of Physics. Recommendations for promotion and tenure are based on evaluations by the Department Chair and the Department Promotion, Tenure, and Evaluation (PTE) Committee. The Department PTE Committee includes all tenured faculty and Associate/Full Professors of Practice or Research Professors holding terminal degrees who have been members of the Department of Physics for at least one year, excluding (i) the Department Chair, (ii) applicants for promotion to Full Professor, and (iii) faculty holding administrative appointments, such as Associate Chair or Director of an academic unit, including those with interim status. Center or Program Directors who do not supervise and/or evaluate other faculty are eligible to serve. When reviewing applications for promotion of Professors of Practice or Research Professors, the Department PTE Committee will solicit advisory input from Associate/Full Professors of Practice or Research Professors. Professors of Practice and Research Professors have voting rights only on applications for promotion of Professors of Practice or Research Professors, respectively. Faculty members, including administrators, who participate in the PTE process shall be recused from deliberations and decisions regarding a candidate if there is a past or current relationship that compromises, or could appear to compromise, a faculty member's judgment of the candidate. The following list illustrates the types of relationships that constitute a conflict of interest:

- Family relationship
- Marital, life partner or dating/romantic/intimate relationship
- Advising relationship (e.g., faculty member was candidate's PhD or postdoctoral advisor)
- Direct financial interest and/or relationship
- Any other relationship that would prevent a sound, unbiased decision

Recusal due to a conflict of interest with one candidate does not prevent a faculty member from participating in deliberations and decisions regarding other candidates. Non-administrative faculty

members who have applied for promotion may not be involved in the review and recommendation process of any candidate. Administrators who have applied for promotion may not be involved in the review and recommendation process of any candidate where there may be a conflict of interest.

There are seven different types of departmental evaluations: (i) annual performance evaluations of all faculty members, (ii) third-year pre-tenure evaluations, (iii) evaluation for tenure and/or promotion to Associate Professor, (iv) post-tenure evaluations, (v) evaluation for promotion to Full Professor, and evaluation for promotions of faculty in the rank of either (vi) Professor of Practice or (vii) Research Professor. Annual performance evaluations are prepared each year for every faculty member by the Department Chair. All other evaluations are prepared by both the Department PTE Committee and Chair. If applicable, the Chair may prepare evaluations jointly with the Associate Chair.

Tenure-track faculty members undergo a pre-tenure review, usually in their third year of the probationary appointment. Exceptions for faculty with tenure credit apply according to the Policy and Procedures for Promotion and Tenure Evaluation from the College of Arts and Sciences, Section 4.3, and NDSU's Policy 352 Promotion, Tenure, and Evaluation, Section 3.5. Procedures for extension of the probationary period (including for childbirth, adoption, and institutional circumstances) apply as described in Policy 352, Section 3.6. Exceptional academic accomplishments may warrant early promotion. Petitions for early promotion shall be initiated by the Department Chair, in accordance with NDSU's Policy 352, Section 3.5.

All reviews and evaluations must be conducted in a manner that respects the rights of faculty members involved, including academic freedom, due process and, if applicable, tenure.

## **2 Evaluation Procedures**

### **2.1 Annual faculty performance evaluations**

The Annual Faculty Performance Evaluation encompasses the areas of instruction, research, and service. The Department Chair will evaluate each faculty member based on the corresponding current position description on file. The annual evaluation is normally initiated by early February and completed in March.

Every year in early February each faculty member submits a Professional Activities Report to the Department Chair. The report typically consists of one or two written pages and summarizes relevant activities from the previous one or two calendar years in the areas of instruction, research, and service. The report must contain summaries of student ratings of instruction. It may also include other professional and scholarly activities that do not fall directly into the categories of instruction, research, and service.

Submission and review of the Professional Activities Report is typically followed by individual meetings of the Department Chair with each faculty member. The meetings provide an opportunity for the faculty member and the Department Chair to discuss performance issues of the previous year in instruction, research, and service. The meetings may also be used to review and, if necessary, revise the position description of the faculty member.

Prior to the end of March, the Department Chair prepares a letter for each faculty member, evaluating the performance of the previous calendar year in instruction, research, and service. For probationary faculty, any perceived deficiencies in progress towards promotion/tenure must be detailed in the annual evaluation letter. For Associate Professors, annual reviews must include specific recommendations to strengthen the case for promotion. Annual reviews of Professors must recognize and reinforce areas of strength, as well as discuss areas of weakness and recommend improvements. The annual review should note any failure to meet the responsibility to create and/or maintain an ethical, respectful, and professional work climate. Should the annual reviews indicate that performance of a faculty member is unsatisfactory, the report shall include a recommendation for appropriate remedial action. The letter is typically signed by both the faculty member and the Department Chair. However, if a faculty member disagrees with the evaluation, the faculty member has the option of not signing the letter and preparing a written response within 14 calendar days. Annual letters of evaluations and, if applicable, faculty response letters are placed in the faculty member's file.

## **2.2 Third-year pre-tenure evaluations**

Probationary faculty, who participate in the third-year pre-tenure review process as coordinated by the College of Arts and Sciences, are also evaluated by the Department PTE Committee and Chair. The third-year pre-tenure departmental evaluations are intended to let the candidate know how the Department views the candidate's progress towards tenure and promotion. If appropriate, suggestions are made on how to improve the candidate's case.

The central part of the third-year pre-tenure evaluation process is the documentation of the candidate's activities in a portfolio, prepared according to the NDSU guidelines for Promotion and Tenure. The portfolio also forms the basis of the departmental evaluations from the Department PTE Committee and Chair. Three weeks prior to the due date for submitting the portfolio to the College of Arts and Sciences, single copy must be submitted to the Department.

The portfolio will be evaluated by the Department PTE Committee and Chair in a manner equivalent to the tenure and promotion process. The Department PTE Committee and Chair may each request an additional meeting with the candidate to discuss the candidate's case. The Department PTE Committee and Chair each prepare a letter of evaluation summarizing progress toward promotion and tenure. Both letters will be submitted to the PTE Committee of the College. After submission, the Department PTE Committee and Chair will mutually share their letters.

## **2.3 Evaluation for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor**

The portfolio, which the candidate has prepared according to the NDSU guidelines for Promotion and Tenure, is made available to the Department Chair and to the members of the Department PTE Committee no later than September 15 of the academic year in which the candidate applies for tenure and/or promotion. This due date is one month prior to the due date for submitting the portfolio to the College of Arts and Sciences. The candidate will be evaluated by the members of the Department PTE Committee and by the Department Chair, each resulting in a letter of recommendation. The PTE Committee and Chair will perform separate evaluations and formulate separate written recommendations, but may discuss and coordinate their letters. Departmental

evaluations are prepared according to the guidelines provided to the candidate at the time of the candidate's appointment to the position.

**Procedures for evaluation by the Department PTE Committee:** The Department PTE Committee will meet as necessary to discuss the candidate's case. It shall also request separate meetings with the candidate and with other faculty. Any faculty member may request confidential meetings with the Department PTE Committee and/or the Department Chair. Once the deliberations are completed, a ballot is circulated among all members of the PTE Committee with the possible response of "yes" or "no" to the question of recommending tenure and/or promotion. The resulting recommendation of the Department PTE Committee will be in favor of tenure and/or promotion if at least 75% of its members vote "yes". In case the Department PTE Committee consists of fewer than four members, 66% will be sufficient for a favorable recommendation. In case of a negative recommendation, the candidate has 14 calendar days to appeal the recommendation and request a second ballot. Prior to the second ballot the candidate may present her/his case to the Department PTE Committee. The Committee must prepare a letter of evaluation with its recommendation and ensure that the letter is forwarded along with the portfolio to the College Dean and the College PTE Committee according to the PTE Timeline published by the Office of the Provost. The Department PTE Committee may decide to explicitly include the voting percentage and, if applicable, whether the vote resulted from a second ballot.

**Procedures for evaluation by the Department Chair:** The Department Chair may request a meeting with the candidate, the Department PTE Committee, and/or with other faculty members. The Department Chair must prepare a letter of evaluation with his/her recommendation and ensure that the letter is forwarded along with the portfolio to the College Dean and the College PTE Committee according to the PTE Timeline published by the Office of the Provost.

## 2.4 Post-tenure review

The post-tenure review process follows the procedures outlined in Policy 352 Section 4.8 and the timeline provided by the Provost's Office.

Faculty members due for review in a specific academic year will submit a post-tenure review portfolio to the Department PTE committee by February 6 of that academic year. The post-tenure review portfolio shall consist of the following documents for the period under review: annual reviews, faculty activity reports, position descriptions, current curriculum vitae, and a statement of context and accomplishments of no more than three pages.

Following the timeline provided by the Provost's Office, the departmental PTE committee performs an evaluation and prepares a letter for each reviewed faculty member. The departmental evaluation determines whether the performance over the review period in instruction, research, and service, meets expectations according to the post-tenure review criteria specified in Section 3 for Associate Professor and for Full Professor. The review shall determine whether the performance was deemed "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". The faculty member must be given 14 calendar days to write a response to the evaluation letter. After that, the post-tenure review portfolio, including the evaluation and, if present, a faculty response, is forwarded to the Culminating Committee.

## **2.5 Evaluation for promotion to Full Professor**

Promotion to full professor is typically considered after the completion of five years of service in rank as Associate Professor. The minimum time in rank for promotion from Associate Professor to Full Professor follows the PTE policy of the College of Arts and Sciences. An Associate Professor has the option of waiting and seeking promotion to Full Professor anytime after five years in rank. The application process and timelines for the application are the same for the application for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Tenured and non-tenure-track candidates for promotion to the rank of Full Professor may choose to be evaluated by the criteria in effect at the time of the previous promotion, if the application is made within eight years of the previous promotion. Thereafter, candidates shall be evaluated by the criteria in effect at the time of application. Candidates applying for promotion to the rank of full professor more than eight years after the previous promotion may choose to be evaluated based on work completed in the eight years immediately prior to applying rather than on their entire post-promotion record.

The evaluation by the Department PTE Committee and the Department Chair for promotion to Full Professor follows the procedure outlined in Section 2.3 of this document. The Department PTE Committee does not include the candidate who applies for promotion to Full Professor.

## **2.6 Evaluation for promotion of Professors of Practice**

Following a recommendation by the Department Chair, a Professor of Practice can apply for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor of Practice or from Associate to Full Professor of Practice. Each application is typically initiated after at least five years in rank. The applicant submits a portfolio, which is evaluated by the same evaluation committees/administrative units as for tenure-track faculty. In contrast to tenure-track faculty, Professors of Practice do not undergo a third-year evaluation. Evaluation criteria for promotion of Professors of Practice include the instruction and service criteria for tenure-track faculty as specified in this document. Research criteria and service to the profession do not apply unless the position description contains such components. In addition, a Professor of Practice typically does not serve as primary advisor for graduate students.

## **2.7 Evaluation for promotion of Research Professors**

Following a recommendation by the Department Chair, a Research Professor can apply for promotion from Research Assistant Professor to Research Associate Professor or from Research Associate Professor to Research Full Professor. Each application is typically initiated after at least five years in rank. The applicant submits a portfolio, which is evaluated by the same evaluation committees/administrative units as for tenure-track faculty. In addition, the portfolio is also reviewed by the Vice President for Research, Creative Activities and Technology Transfer. Evaluation criteria for promotion of Research Professors include the criteria for research and service to the profession as specified in this document. Service beyond service to the profession and instruction criteria do not apply unless the position description contains such components.

### 3 Criteria for Promotion and Tenure

Candidates will be evaluated according to their past, continuing, and projected contributions to the overall programs of the Department, College, and University. Evidence of accomplishment in the areas of instruction, research, and service will be evaluated.

**Instruction criteria and evidence:** Consistent with NDSU Policy 332 Assessment of Teaching, a candidate demonstrates quality of teaching (encompassing both instruction and advising) by providing evidence and information from multiple sources.

Evidence must include peer and student/participant evaluations. Note that student ratings of instruction, by themselves, are insufficient evidence of teaching effectiveness. Additional evidence may include the following: honors, awards, and recognition for teaching excellence; participation in workshops, seminars, or other training to improve teaching; active membership in professional teaching organizations; activities in curriculum/program/course development, including instructional grants and distance education; success in advising; success in directing graduate student academic programs; recruitment/retention activities; success in work with student organizations; and success in providing enhanced educational opportunities for individuals at remote locations.

**Research criteria and evidence:** The candidate has established a competitive and independent research program based on original work.

Evidence must include a regular and sustained record of publications in peer reviewed journals that reflects the quality and impact of the research, with a rolling average of at least one publication annually over the review period for a 40% research assignment. Additional evidence may include the following: publication of books or book chapters; presentations of research results at national or international meetings; invitations to meetings and conferences; invitations to give seminars/colloquia at other institutions; invited review articles; honors, awards, recognition for research; success in directing graduate student research; supervising post-doctoral fellows; supervising undergraduate research projects, including the Senior Project (Physics 488 and 489); contributions in collaborative projects.

Faculty must solicit funds (and/or other resources) to support their scholarly activities. Evidence for grantsmanship may include: a list of grants obtained with indication of the portion available to the faculty member; list of submitted, but unfunded proposals, possibly with review reports attached; attraction of research students (graduate and/or undergraduate students) with scholarships, fellowships, or self-procured funding; list of in-kind services solicited and gained for research purposes; and indications of how grants are leveraged to pursue larger research goals.

**Service criteria and evidence:** The candidate has promoted collegial relationships and a positive work environment in the Department, participated in the governance of the Department, College, and University, and contributed to service to the profession.

Evidence for participation in governance must include serving in at least one departmental or College or University committee. Additional evidence may include: assigned or assumed institutional responsibilities; participation in events that promote the Department, College and/or University; contributions to efforts or events that encourage or require inter-unit collaboration; leadership/participation in campus-wide events, including science fairs and Science Olympiad;

representation of the Department, College, or University to the public, especially through outreach activities; contributions to fostering a campus climate that supports and respects faculty, staff, and students who have diverse cultures, backgrounds, and points of view; contributions to the management or improvement of administrative procedures or programs; and contributions to NDSU's Land Grant mission. Evidence for service to the profession may include work on professional society committees; organization of workshops or conferences; contributions to joint works (compendia, regional publications, etc.); reviewing for journals; reviewing for granting agencies; and serving as editor for disciplinary publications.

**Specification of extended criteria for promotion to Full Professor:** The criteria for promotion to Full Professor substantially exceed those for promotion to Associate Professor. A strong case can be made when the candidate has demonstrated work of special significance or an exceptional achievement in one or more of the areas of instruction, research, and service. Evaluations and other documentation should show excellence or signs of continued improvement in all three areas of responsibility (instruction, research, and service). The *instruction* component includes a continuous record of excellence in teaching and other instructional activities and contributions to the improvement of instruction (e.g., new course and curriculum development, introduction of new teaching methods, textbook contributions, instructional grants). The *research* component includes an internationally competitive and adequately funded research program that incorporates and educates students, leads to regular publications in refereed journals of high reputation, and shows evidence for prominence in the candidate's research field as recognized by academic honors or frequent invitations to conferences, symposia, colloquia, or seminars. The *service* component includes professional and scholarly activities (such as assumed responsibilities in professional societies, work as editor or editorial board member for peer-reviewed journals, service on review panels or as external reviewer of grant proposals or doctoral theses, and outreach to the community and public) and leadership roles in the governance of the Department and beyond the Department (College or University). Generally, the candidate is expected to have demonstrated an increase in assumed and designated responsibilities, growth in expertise and capability, and a high level of collegiality and visibility inside and outside the Department.

**Specification of criteria for post-tenure review of Associate Professor:** The criteria outlined above for instruction, research, and service serve as the foundation for meeting expectations of post-tenure review. Exceptional performance in one category can offset weaker performance in others. Expectations scale in proportion with both percentage of research assignments and evaluation period. For example, the cumulative expectation for a faculty member with a 40% research assignment over 3 years is equivalent to that of a faculty member with a 24% assignment over 5 years. Teaching and service contributions are likewise evaluated in proportion to assigned workload and evaluation period.

**Specification of criteria for post-tenure review of Full Professor:** The criteria outlined above for instruction, research, and service as well as the extended criteria for promotion to Full Professor serve as the foundation for meeting expectations of post-tenure review. Exceptional performance in one category can offset weaker performance in others. Expectations scale in proportion with both percentage of research assignments and evaluation period. For example, the cumulative expectation for a faculty member with a 40% research assignment over 3 years is equivalent to that of a faculty member with a 24% assignment over 5 years. Teaching and service contributions are

likewise evaluated in proportion to assigned workload and evaluation period.

4 Non-renewal of Probationary Faculty

Pursuant to University Policy 350.3.1, the Department Chair may, at any time during a faculty member’s probationary period, open a discussion within the Department for non-renewal of that member’s appointment. The discussion will be initiated by a letter from the Department Chair to the faculty member in question, stating the reason for non-renewal. Subsequently, the Department Chair will call one or more meetings that will be attended by the Department Chair and the faculty member in question. All tenured/tenure-eligible faculty may attend the meeting and participate in the discussion. The Department Chair shall give significant consideration to these meetings in her/his final decision of recommending early termination of the probationary appointment. Deadlines for notice of non-renewal, as stipulated in University Policy 350.3.1, must be followed.

5 Procedure for Revising this Document

This document will be reviewed annually by the tenured faculty of the department, at which time revisions may be suggested and discussed. Revision to the document may also be initiated by the Department Chair as required to address specific needs. All potential revisions will be discussed and voted on by the Department Chair and all tenured faculty who have been members in the Department of Physics for at least one year. A two-third majority is required to approve revisions.

History:

- Revision approved 08/29/2025
- Revision approved 03/08/2022
- Revision approved 04/12/2013
- Revision approved 03/03/2009
- Original version 04/27/2006

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