

4.07 Academic Tenure and Promotion

A. Overview of Tenure and Promotion

1. Tenure

Academic tenure refers to the conditions and guarantees that apply to a faculty member's employment. Tenure provides protection against involuntary suspension or discharge from employment or reduction in rank except upon specified grounds and in accordance with the procedures provided in Sections 4.09 and 4.10. Tenure secures the academic freedom of faculty members and enables the institution to attract high quality faculty. The tenure decision shall include, but is not limited to, an assessment of:

- a. The faculty members demonstrated professional competence as evaluated by meeting or exceeding departmental criteria;
- b. The faculty member's potential for future contributions and;
- c. Institutional needs and resources.

2. Promotion

The University initially assigns faculty rank in accordance with degree preparation, experience, and performance record. Faculty members achieve a higher rank and earn a higher salary on the basis of a collegial review process that evaluates performance toward meeting departmental criteria.

3. Probationary period

- a. Tenure-track faculty can be on probation for a maximum period of six years, subject to extensions as provided in Section 4.00.
- b. The probationary period provides time for tenure-track faculty to establish a record of academic achievement and to demonstrate potential for future productivity. It also allows the University to adjust faculty resources in accordance with institutional needs.
- c. Faculty may negotiate a shorter probationary period at the time of hire. Alternatively, faculty with exemplary performance and the endorsement of their department head and dean may apply for early consideration of tenure. Faculty

who fail in their application for early tenure may reapply during the standard probationary period.

- d. The review of tenure-track faculty must be conducted on a schedule that permits the timely notice requirements in Section 4.09B to be observed.
- e. The probationary period is determined by the following guidelines:
 - 1) The maximum probationary period shall be six years of continuous, full-time service at Western Carolina University. Faculty members whose probationary period has extended into the sixth year must be granted either a promise of tenure or, if tenure is denied, a fixed-term appointment for one academic year.
 - 2) Nine-month tenure-track faculty employed for one academic year, beginning in the fall term, shall be counted as fulfilling one year of probationary period.
 - 3) For nine-month tenure-track faculty who do not begin during the fall term, the probationary period will begin the subsequent academic year.
 - 4) For faculty on twelve-month appointments, each successive year of full-time service beginning not later than September 15 of one calendar year and extending through June of the next calendar year shall be counted as fulfilling one year of the probationary period.
 - 5) Summer school teaching/service, experience as a graduate assistant, graduate fellow, or other part-time employment does not count toward years of experience for purposes of determining the probationary period of a tenure-track faculty member.
 - 6) In the event of serious illness, childbirth or other compelling reasons, the probationary period may be extended by the Provost through a university process established, in consultation with and endorsed by the Faculty Senate, and approved by the Chancellor.

4. Awarding of tenure

- a. The Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system has delegated the authority to award tenure to the Western Carolina University Board of Trustees.
- b. The Western Carolina University Board of Trustees awards tenure based on the recommendation of the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee.
- c. Tenure becomes effective upon the approval by the Board of Trustees.

5. Rank

- a. Western Carolina University recognizes the following faculty ranks: 1) instructor, 2) assistant professor, 3) associate professor, and 4) full professor.
- b. An earned master's degree from a regionally accredited institution is a minimal requirement for appointment to the rank of instructor. For appointments at the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor, an earned doctorate from a regionally accredited institution is normally required. If specified in departmental criteria, the highest degree normally earned in the field (i.e. terminal degree) may be accepted in lieu of a doctoral degree. Exceptions can be granted in the departmental criteria with the Dean and Provost's approval.

6. Eligibility for promotion

- a. Candidates must be full-time employees, tenure-track or tenured, and hold an appropriate degree. Promotion is not based on a faculty member's years of service. Instead, faculty promotions are based on earned degrees and cumulative records of performance that meet or exceed departmental criteria.
- b. Required years in rank for promotion.

Tenured or tenure-track faculty must spend a minimum time in rank of five years. Exceptions may be made in cases where faculty have demonstrated extraordinary competence and have made significant contributions to the University.

- c. Minimum university standards for assignment of rank are shown below. Definitions and explanations for standards are found in Section 4.04C.

1) Assistant professor

Evidence of achievement and promise for sustained contributions to the institution in teaching, service, and scholarship.

2) Associate professor

Evidence of high levels of achievement and contributions to the institution in teaching, service, and scholarship.

3) Professor

Evidence of superior teaching, service, and scholarship.

- d. Experience as a graduate assistant, graduate fellow, summer school faculty, or any other part-time employment are not counted toward years of experience for purposes of determining the appropriate initial rank or promotion in rank.

B. Application and Review Process for Tenure and Promotion.

The tenure review process is a review of a tenure-track faculty member's record in meeting departmental criteria for tenure and promotion during the probationary period. Tenure is a continuing commitment by the University to the faculty member. Tenure and promotion recommendations are made at the department and/or college level, then to the University Collegial Review Committee before being forwarded to the Provost, Chancellor, and Board of Trustees. Tenure review occurs no later than the final year of a faculty member's probationary period.

Each faculty member submits a dossier which is a cumulative record documenting progress toward tenure and/or promotion. Dossiers for tenure, promotion, and reappointment have a similar format but the review procedures are different.

1. The Provost, in consultation with the Collegial Review Council, will provide instructions for the preparation of dossiers in April for the next TPR cycle.
2. Faculty members prepare and submit tenure and promotion dossiers to department heads for review by department collegial review committees. These committees must meet and vote according to the deadlines in Section 4.07.C.3. Department heads' recommendations and department collegial review committee votes are forwarded to the college collegial review committees and appropriate deans. These committees must meet and vote according to the deadlines in Section 4.07.C.3. Collegial review committees' and deans' recommendations are forwarded to the University Collegial Review Committee. This committee's votes are forwarded to the Provost whose recommendations are submitted to the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees for final decision.
3. At each level of review candidates are informed in writing within 5 working days of recommendations and vote counts.
4. Dossier submission deadlines

At the beginning of each academic year, the Provost distributes a collegial review calendar. Timely notice of a decision not to reappoint depends on candidate's unbroken length of service at Western Carolina University in the same class of appointment. (See Section 4.07A.3 for more on probationary periods.) Therefore, deadlines for submission of a tenure and promotion dossiers vary according to the date of initial appointment. Important dates relating to the probationary period for tenure purposes will be included in the hiring contract.

The deadline for the submission of tenure and/or promotion dossier is the 20th working day of September.

- * The term "working days" as used in these policies means any day (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) on the undergraduate Academic Calendar that classes are scheduled to be in session during the faculty member's contracted employment term, not including summer sessions.

C. Other Tenure and Promotion Considerations

1. If faculty apply for promotion or tenure prior to their last year of probation and receive a negative review at any level, the dossier will not be forwarded to the next level, except when a faculty member requests that it continue through the process. Such requests shall be made in writing to the committee chair or administrator at the negative review level and must be submitted no later than 5 working days after receipt of notification.
2. Faculty will be notified of their eligibility to apply for promotion and/or tenure on or before May 1st of the academic year prior to the year of eligibility.
3. Review deadlines

The Provost publishes a review schedule for promotion and tenure by the end of spring semester for the next academic year. Once the process begins, a date specified by the Provost's Office, all levels of review must complete their work no later than the times indicated in the decision deadlines column as shown in the matrix below. Candidates must receive notification of the reviewer's decision according to the time limits shown in the letter of notice deadlines column. All deadlines for letters of notice are counted from the end of the decision deadline.

Decision Deadlines	Reviewer	Letter of Notice Deadlines
10 working days	Departmental Committee	5 working days
8 working days	Department Head	5 working days
10 working days	College Committee	5 working days
7 working days	Dean	5 working days
University Committee Review Begins 5 working days after Dean's Decision Deadline		
26 working days excluding finals week	University Committee	5 working days
8 working days	Provost	10 working days
March BOT Meeting	Chancellor	

D. Procedures Guiding Review Committees

1. Departmental collegial review committee
 - a. Each department shall have a tenure and promotion advisory committee that shall be chaired by the department head (non-voting) and composed of up to six tenured faculty members elected by the department's full-time faculty. In departments with six or fewer tenured faculty members, the committee shall be

composed of the department head and tenured faculty, provided the resultant committee shall consist of at least three tenured faculty members, exclusive of the head.

- b. In departments with fewer than three tenured faculty, the Department Head in consultation with the department and dean), selects tenured faculty from similar departments to constitute a committee of at least three tenured faculty. If the department head is up for review then the departmental collegial review committee consults with the dean to finalize the committee.
- c. Committee members may not be present when their own dossiers are being considered.
- d. When the department head is the person being considered by the committee, the department head shall be excused, and the committee shall elect a pro tem chair (voting) from its membership. The pro tem chair shall submit the committee's recommendations directly to the appropriate dean.
- e. The university library faculty shall function as a department, and the University Librarian shall serve as nonvoting chair of the Library Tenure and Promotion Committee.

2. College collegial review committees*

- a. Each college shall have a tenure and promotion advisory committee chaired by the dean (non-voting) and composed of not less than six nor more than 12 tenured faculty members to serve staggered three year terms. Each college shall determine the total number of faculty members to be included on the committee.
- b. Half of the committee is elected by the college faculty and half is appointed by the dean.
- c. In colleges with six or more departments, no more than one faculty member may be elected from a single department and no more than one member may be appointed from a single department. In colleges with fewer than six departments each department must be represented by at least one elected member.
- d. When making appointments to this committee, the dean shall try to balance seniority, professorial rank, departmental representation, and continuity of membership. Deans may reappoint faculty members to consecutive terms in order to secure a degree of continuity in the committee membership.
- e. Deans of other colleges and senior administrative officers are not eligible for appointment to a college committee.

* Schools headed by a dean who reports to the Provost function as colleges as described in these procedures.

3. University Collegial Review Committee

- a. The University Collegial Review Committee shall consist of the Provost as nonvoting chair; the Dean of the Graduate School, one tenured faculty member elected from each college by the faculty of the college, one tenured faculty member elected by the faculty of the university library, and tenured faculty members appointed by the Provost equal to the number of elected faculty members on the committee.
- b. The elected members of the committee shall serve three-year terms, staggered so that one-third of the elected members are elected each year. Elected members may not serve consecutive terms. Appointed members shall serve one year terms without limitation on the number of consecutive terms.
- c. When making appointments to this committee, the Provost shall try to balance seniority, professorial rank, college representation, and continuity of membership. The Provost may reappoint faculty members to consecutive terms in order to secure a degree of continuity in the committee membership.