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Constituting Promotion and Tenure Committees

The P&T Guidelines include these notes:

- There must be at least 4 votes from each committee, votes of yes or no; abstain and absent are not part of the 4.
- When a candidate is engaged in interdisciplinary work, team science, or public/engaged scholarship, the tenure-home unit is encouraged to include scholars relevant to that work. [People with formal split appointments are a separate case and not addressed here.]
- Adding members is the joint responsibility of the chair of the department (for the departmental-level committee) or dean, and the regular committee members.
- A case becomes “all read” (special handling) “where fewer than 75% of eligible reviewers approve of promotion or tenure.” *If too many ‘eligible voters’ (people with access to the edossier) are absent or abstain, even a unanimous-positive vote will result in ‘fewer than 75% of eligible reviewers’ approving.*

Plus:

- Campus P&T committee members (and some at the school level) have expressed concern when a candidate’s work is primarily or exclusively conducted with departmental colleagues who are then the primary or exclusive voters on his or her case. While we wish to encourage collaboration, it is important that the departmental review has both the reality and appearance of impartiality. If there are many such collaborations, consider adding members who have no relation with the candidate.

Committees go through three steps:

- Determining initial membership
- Determining availability
- Orientation ←this is NOT addressed in the guidelines. Suggestions below reflect advice for best practice.

ONLY people who pass all steps should be considered actual members of the committee, with access to edossier.

Initial membership:

Option one: membership elected according to unit constitutions; those members also check # 4 and 5 below.

Option two: Others start with “all eligible” unit members



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Eligible means:

1. Not on sabbatical* or other leave during the fall semester
2. At or above the rank sought (equivalent ranks are: [associate clinical = associate tenure-track = senior lecturer]; [full clinical = full tenure-track = teaching professor]) and in the appropriate faculty type (clinical¹ cannot serve on promotion or tenure review for tenure track)
3. Possessing tenure* if it is a tenure or tenure-track case

These considerations are particular to each candidate:

4. No conflict of interest (e.g. nepotism) with that candidate
5. Not the chair for that candidate²

*In special circumstances where voters are needed: if someone is on sabbatical, or has been awarded tenure in the last cycle but it is not yet effective, the person may serve on the unit P&T committee—confirm with OAA.

To get to four votes minimum, be sure to subtract anybody who is a member at multiple levels and not voting at that particular level.

Availability:

Committees should schedule at least two meetings, to allow for reconsiderations.

Potential committee members should affirm:

- They intend to be at each and every meeting
- They commit to read relevant materials

On the particular meeting dates, some may be unavoidably absent. Those would be recorded as “absent.”

Oriented to the P&T process:

Units should arrange for orientation to the process, to include:

- a. Review of P&T criteria for units and schools, especially any changes
- b. Review of P&T processes, including effective communication processes
- c. Diversity education regarding faculty evaluation³

NEW members should participate in all three orientation topics their initial year.

ALL members should receive orientation at least every three years.

This is a suggestion for best practice.

ONLY faculty who meet selection, availability, and orientation criteria should be listed as committee members and included in edossier ‘silos.’



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Adding members:

Committees need to add members for two main reasons:

- Adequately examining the candidate's scholarship: trans-disciplinary, team science, and public / community-engaged scholarship are the most common reasons. The campus relies on *departmental committees* to provide the most subject/discipline-specific review of the candidate's work. All other levels, by design, include multiple disciplines.
- Lack of sufficient number of voters. Note that while the campus specifies a *minimum* of four votes, it is also allowable to add voters for a higher number (e.g. 6 or 7). This is most common when:
 - The department itself is small
 - The candidate is at full rank

Advice:

1. Do not involve the *candidate* in adding members. The candidate cannot name or influence the composition of the P&T committee.
2. If the candidate had been a member of a different IU or IUPUI department, be sensitive about soliciting people from that department. It is possible the candidate changed to *your* department because of a lack of appreciation for his or her scholarship in that original department.
3. The natural committee ("duly constituted") committee must agree to* the new members. Work with the chair of the committee. (*added "in consultation with").
4. If members of the department have the opportunity to be part of the department OR school committees, think about composition of BOTH the department AND the school committee. The ideal is a very discipline-specific department committee, and a broader school committee, each of which has a minimum of 4 votes.
5. Especially for cases for **full professor**, it may make sense to skip the departmental level entirely. If, for example, a department has NO full professors, there is seldom value in composing a "department" committee that is entirely populated with external people. *Notify Karen Lee about this so the edossier can be routed properly.*
6. [FYI: if the department chair is not at full rank, that level of review is skipped entirely.]



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For questions related to faculty affairs, please contact the
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