

Tenure-Track Handbook



Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Harvard University
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DEAN'S LETTER

Dear Colleagues,

As Edgerley Family Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), I am deeply committed to a tenure-track system. Having climbed the FAS “ladder” myself, I understand the importance of making this system transparent and easy to navigate. This handbook, which outlines the tenure-track process, is intended to address many of your questions and concerns. Although expectations and norms may differ by discipline, each tenure-track faculty member experiences the same formal system of reviews with the same general criteria. It is our hope that this handbook will demystify the tenure-track process and provide you with a basic framework for success.

All of our tenure-track faculty have been appointed because you have the intellectual ability, creativity, and drive to be excellent candidates for promotion to tenure here at Harvard. The department chairs, the area deans of the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), the academic deans, the Senior Adviser to the Dean on Faculty Development, and I are committed to supporting your intellectual and professional development. This handbook is one tool that will help you accomplish this goal. We are also working with each department to strengthen mentoring across the FAS. These measures benefit us all because they create an environment that attracts and promotes the very best tenure-track faculty, thereby ensuring that Harvard remains an institution with the highest standards for teaching and research.

Information for this handbook has been culled from a variety of sources, including members of the Committee on Appointments and Promotions, department chairs, SEAS area deans, other tenure-track faculty, recently tenured colleagues, the Senior Adviser to the Dean on Faculty Development, the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, and the Standing Committee on Women. I thank them all for their contributions. I hope you find this handbook useful and that you will consult it not only at the beginning of your appointment, but also throughout your time at Harvard.

With my best wishes and my many thanks for all that you bring to our institution,

Sincerely yours,

Michael D. Smith



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OVERVIEW

The organization of this handbook mirrors the stages of experience for tenure-track faculty. We begin with the initial appointment, turn next to the array of questions new tenure-track faculty members face, and then describe the various reviews experienced by tenure-track faculty.

Your experience as a tenure-track faculty member begins with the search that results in your appointment. Following the acceptance of your offer and the start of your first appointment, you are on the tenure track: a member of the ladder faculty. Throughout the course of your appointment, department chairs or SEAS area deans and other senior colleagues at Harvard and elsewhere will help you to develop your career.

A few definitions, to begin:

Assistant professorship: a tenure-track appointment held by individuals who have the promise to produce scholarship and teaching of the highest quality and who have the potential to be competitive for a tenured position in the department within seven years.

Associate professorship: a tenure-track appointment held by individuals who have demonstrated sufficient promise and achievement in teaching and research to qualify for tenure at a major research institution within three to five years. Appointments to this rank are usually made by promotion from an assistant professorship, though they are occasionally made by external appointment.

Tenured professorship: an appointment without limit of time at the rank of professor. Tenured faculty members are scholars of the first order of eminence who have demonstrated excellence in teaching and research and who have the capacity to make significant and lasting contributions to the department(s) that proposes the appointment. The foremost criteria for appointment are scholarly achievement and impact on the field, evidence of intellectual leadership and creative accomplishment, potential for future accomplishments, teaching and advising effectiveness in a variety of settings with both undergraduate and graduate students, and potential contributions to the University and broader scholarly communities.



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It may help to see a timeline of the course of your appointment. Assuming a regular schedule (without appointment extensions for childbirth or other personal reasons), your appointment progresses as follows:¹



We encourage you to review the materials that follow, both at the beginning of your appointment and then again as you progress through the steps of reviews and promotions. Any questions about these materials can be addressed to your department chair or SEAS area dean, your department administrator or SEAS area director, the assistant dean for your division or for SEAS, or your divisional dean or the John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS.² The FAS Office for Faculty Affairs and the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity are also good sources of information and would welcome your questions and feedback.

¹ Tenure-track faculty are hired into one five-year term as an assistant professor. When an assistant professor is promoted to an associate professor in his or her penultimate year, the first year of the associate term supersedes the last year of the assistant term.

² For the rest of this document, references to the divisional deans also include the John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS, and references to the assistant deans for the division also include the assistant dean for SEAS.



START-UP ISSUES

You should retain a copy of your offer letter in an accessible place. Your offer letter is the official record of the University's commitment to you. There should be no confusion about the elements of the offer letter. If you have questions of interpretation, please contact your department chair or SEAS area dean or the Office for Faculty Development.

In the first summer after your appointment, you should attend the New Faculty Institute. This program is designed to help ease your transition to the tenure-track faculty at Harvard by providing an introduction to teaching at Harvard, as well as discussions of promotion and tenure, working with graduate students, and balancing teaching and research. We strongly recommend that you attend, not just for the content, but also for the professional connections and friendships that you will forge with your newly appointed colleagues.

If you need to set up a laboratory, you should work closely with your department administrator or SEAS area director and the sponsored-research staff to access start-up funds as necessary (in some cases even before your appointment begins) and to transfer any grants you may already have to Harvard. The Office for Physical Resources and Planning will work closely with you to design and set up your office and laboratory space, and departmental staff will help you purchase equipment for your lab.

If your research and teaching interests overlap with those of one or more of the centers or standing committees at Harvard, you should feel free to reach out to them and draw upon their professional connections and resources. The Assistant Dean for Faculty Development can introduce you to the relevant colleagues.

While you are navigating your first year at Harvard, we urge you to remember the personal side of your life. Harvard, Boston, and New England offer a plethora of intellectual, cultural, artistic, athletic, gastronomic, and other opportunities for individuals and families that can provide a break from the confines and routines of campus life.



QUESTIONS TO ASK AND WHOM TO ASK

In your first year at Harvard, it will be important to get to know “the lay of the land” so that you can obtain answers to questions quickly and maximize your productivity. For example, you should learn how to buy equipment cost-effectively, strategically apply for external leave funding, and both name and schedule your classes to maximize enrollments. Department administrators or SEAS area directors, department chairs or SEAS area deans, and colleagues all can help you in these efforts.

Department Administrators or SEAS Area Directors: the first line of defense for general questions regarding day-to-day operations, staff support, and office basics (including furniture, supplies, and computers). In those instances in which they do not know the answer to your queries, they are adept at directing you to the appropriate person or office.

Department Chair or SEAS Area Dean: the source for formal advice on preparing for reviews and understanding promotion criteria, including scholarship, teaching portfolio (e.g., mix of small and large, graduate and undergraduate courses), and committee work, as well as other policy and planning issues such as the timing of leaves.

Colleagues/Mentors: a resource for advice on research, the writing and planning of grant proposals and publications, what meetings or conferences to attend and how often, best practices for teaching and working with graduate students, and the management of relationships in the workplace (including with staff).

In addition, there are many others, both within and outside your department, who can provide valuable information. For example, the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) or the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in your department can address questions about working with undergraduates and graduate students. The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office for Undergraduate Education are great resources for formulating teaching strategies and answering other course-related issues. The table on the next page lists other resources for frequently asked questions.



QUESTIONS TO ASK AND WHOM TO ASK

Issues	Resource & website links
Policies and procedures for reviews and promotions	The Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs in your division
Leave policies and eligibility (<i>including parental teaching relief and appointment extensions</i>)	The Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs in your division
Mentoring and professional development networks	Divisional Deans/John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS; Standing Committee on Women; Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity
Teaching	Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning ; Office of Undergraduate Education ; Advising Programs Office
Research/Grants	Departmental Grants Administrator; FAS Research Administration Services ; FAS Office of Finance ; SEAS Research Administration Office ; FAS Committee on the Use of Human Subjects



SECOND-YEAR REVIEW

Your second-year review is an informal assessment of your progress to date in research, teaching, advising, and citizenship.³ The primary goals of the second-year review are to ensure that you are receiving appropriate advice and mentoring from your senior colleagues, that your research and teaching are developing well, and that you are aware of any potential concerns.

Your department conducts the review in the manner it finds most productive. The review is not an externally oriented assessment and is conducted only with reference to the opinions of your internal senior colleagues. Ordinarily, a small committee of your senior colleagues conducts the review.

At the conclusion of the review, your department chair or SEAS area dean will have a conversation with you about your progress, discuss any issues that could affect your promotion to associate professor, and offer specific advice. After this conversation, you will also receive a summary of the review in a letter from your department chair or SEAS area dean. This letter is first reviewed by your divisional dean to ensure that the department is providing you with useful feedback.

Your second-year review provides a good opportunity to initiate conversations with members of your mentoring and professional development networks, for additional advice about how to best invest your energy and develop your research portfolio. You should talk with your department chair or SEAS area dean about planning for your next review and with other colleagues about how to move your research agenda forward, what you plan to accomplish by your next review, how to plan your publications and other activities for maximum impact, etc. You may also want to take this opportunity to talk with colleagues, as well as staff at the Bok Center, about further developing your teaching skills.

³ Externally appointed associate professors with five-year terms also undergo a second-year review.



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Your review for promotion to associate professor (which is an untenured rank at Harvard) ordinarily occurs during the penultimate year of your appointment as an assistant professor.⁴ During the review process, the department will assemble a dossier – including external evaluations – of your work. After carefully reviewing your dossier, the department will assess your research, teaching, advising of undergraduates, and mentoring of graduate students and make a recommendation to the divisional dean based on the following criteria: whether you have demonstrated sufficient promise and achievement to qualify for tenure at a major research institution within three to five years. The divisional dean closely monitors the process to ensure that it is fair and consistent with FAS policies. Your associate review is a rigorous process that you should take seriously, even though the majority of assistant professors are successfully promoted. It is the first opportunity to gather formal feedback from scholars outside of Harvard and will help guide you to focus on specific areas as you move forward to your tenure review.

The Associate Review Process

The process for promotion is briefly outlined below. Each step is described in detail directly following the outline.

- (1) **Promotion Dossier:** In the summer⁵ prior to, or at the beginning of, your penultimate year as an assistant professor, your department chair or SEAS area dean explains the review process and asks you to provide materials for your promotion dossier.
- (2) **Committee Review:** Your chair or area dean appoints a committee to review your dossier and recommend to the department whether to proceed further with the evaluation.
- (3) **External Letters:** Your chair or area dean solicits external letters, which assess your scholarship and teaching and are included in your dossier.
- (4) **Departmental Vote:** Your committee shares the dossier and its evaluation with the department. After a discussion, the department votes on whether to recommend promotion.
- (5) **Decanal Review:** In the case of an affirmative vote by the department, the divisional dean with an FAS Committee on Appointments and Promotions (CAP) subcommittee review your case and decide on the final outcome. In some cases, the entire CAP may review the dossier and advise the Edgerley Family Dean on the outcome.
- (6) **Review Summary:** Your chair or area dean discusses the outcome of your case with you and gives you a letter summarizing the findings of the review. (If, at any point in the process, the department decides not to proceed with your review, the divisional dean must still review the department's decision and the reasons behind it.)

⁴ Assistant professors with calendar-year appointments (appointments that end on December 31 in a future year) ordinarily follow a review timetable based on the calendar year. This timing is described in the footnotes.

⁵ For calendar-year appointees, this step occurs during the winter (December/January), prior to or at the beginning of your penultimate year.



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(1) **Promotion Dossier:** In the summer⁶ prior to, or at the beginning of, your penultimate year as an assistant professor, your chair or area dean will meet with you to describe the review process, deadlines for submission of materials, and the timing of various stages of the review. By early September,⁷ you should submit the following materials to your department to be included in your dossier:

- A *curriculum vitae*, including a complete bibliography
- Copies of all of your publications (including any that are forthcoming) or other scholarly material. In art-making fields, copies, as appropriate, of all creative works.
- Teaching and advising materials, including: a list of senior theses you have supervised, graduate exams and dissertation committees you have served on or are serving on, representative course syllabi, and evidence of teaching effectiveness, such as teaching awards
- A teaching statement, which discusses your teaching approach and philosophy, what you have found effective, your own assessment of areas for improvement, and what you would like to pursue in future courses
- A research statement, which briefly summarizes the work you have already accomplished and lays out your research goals as you move forward to your tenure review

You may also include a list of outside scholars whom you would like the department to contact for letters of evaluations and/or a list of scholars whom you feel should not be consulted (this latter list must include an explanation of why these scholars should not be consulted). The department will consider carefully how best to take this information into account when developing the list of external reviewers.

To round out the materials in your dossier, the department will add a summary teaching chart, which lists all of the courses you have taught since the beginning of your appointment at Harvard, as well as the enrollments and the Q scores for each course. Your department may also speak with or write to students about your teaching and advising. Please note that you should not solicit letters from your students yourself, as this may put them in an awkward position.

In preparing for your review, you should keep the promotion timeline in mind. For example, you may wish to time the submission of important manuscripts so that peer review occurs before your penultimate year as an assistant professor. Because your associate review includes external

⁶ For calendar-year appointees, this step occurs during the winter (December/January), prior to or at the beginning of your penultimate year.

⁷ By early April, for calendar-year appointees.



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evaluations, it is important to be known in your field. You should present your work at seminars organized by other universities and at national and international conferences. It may be helpful to consult with your senior colleagues about what types of conferences to attend and how much time to dedicate to such activities. You might also wish to share and discuss your work with non-Harvard colleagues, to make sure that relevant outside scholars are familiar with your research.

(2) **Committee Review:** Your chair or area dean will appoint a review committee consisting of senior faculty colleagues from your department and, as appropriate, from other departments. The composition of the review committee must be authorized by the divisional dean to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest and that it is sufficiently representative. This committee evaluates your materials and then makes a recommendation to the department as to whether to continue with the review. If the department votes not to proceed, the divisional dean must approve the decision. The chair or area dean will then meet with you to discuss that decision; you will also receive a letter, which will have been reviewed by the divisional dean, documenting the outcome.

(3) **External Letters:** If, as is most common, the department decides to proceed with the review, the chair or area dean will solicit letters from external scholars to assess your progress in research and teaching. The external reviewers are asked to make a recommendation about your promotion using the following benchmark: whether you have demonstrated sufficient promise and achievement to qualify for tenure at a major research institution within three to five years.⁸ The chair or area dean usually sends letters to the external scholars in early November⁹ with a request for responses by January. Associate promotion dossiers must include three to five letters from external reviewers. Before the chair or area dean sends a letter soliciting the opinions of external scholars, both the letter and the list of recipients must be reviewed by the divisional dean. (To see a sample letter to external reviewers, please see the *FAS Appointment and Promotion Handbook*: <http://academic-appointments.fas.harvard.edu/>.)

(4) **Departmental Vote:** After the committee receives the external evaluations, it reports back to the department regarding its findings. The tenured members of your department then discuss and vote on your case. This process usually takes place in February to early March¹⁰ because your completed dossier is due at the Office for Faculty Affairs by mid-March. If the vote is positive, the department chair or SEAS area dean, together with the chair of the review committee, writes a case statement for your dossier that includes a summary of the departmental review process and an evaluation of your scholarly qualifications, teaching, undergraduate advising, and graduate student

⁸ While most departments do not include a comparison list of external scholars in these letters, it is the standard practice in some FAS departments and in SEAS to include a comparison list.

⁹ In early June, with a request for responses by August, for calendar-year appointees.

¹⁰ In September, for calendar-year appointees, with completed dossiers due by early October.



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mentoring. The completed dossier is forwarded to the divisional dean for review along with a draft of your associate professor appointment letter. This letter summarizes the findings of the review and offers constructive advice about planning for your tenure review. If the department votes against your promotion, then the chair or area dean must explain this decision to the divisional dean. The chair or area dean will then meet with you to discuss the decision. In this case, you will also receive a letter, which will have been reviewed by the divisional dean, documenting the outcome.

(5) **Decanal Review:** If your department votes to recommend promotion to associate professor, then your dossier will be reviewed by the divisional dean with an FAS Committee on Appointments and Promotions (CAP) subcommittee. The members of CAP include the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS, all of the divisional deans (including the John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS), the Danoff Dean of Harvard College, the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), the Dean for Faculty Affairs and Planning, the Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Development, the Senior Adviser on Faculty Development, and one additional senior faculty member from each division. The divisional dean and the CAP subcommittee evaluate the quality and quantity of scholarship and teaching and provide specific feedback to the chair or area dean on the draft appointment letter included in the dossier. If the reviewers feel there are issues that warrant further discussion, the full CAP will be asked to discuss the dossier and the appropriate feedback to the chair or area dean on the appointment letter. Each year, at least a few dossiers for promotion to associate professor are reviewed by CAP. This additional step does not mean that the promotions will not be successful, but rather indicates that they would benefit from further review by a broader committee.

(6) **Review Summary:** The associate professor appointment letter you receive from the department chair or SEAS area dean upon promotion is the formal record of the feedback and advice resulting from the review. The letter conveys a summary of the opinions offered by the external scholars (without attribution, to maintain confidentiality) and may at times include quotations from those letters, as long as doing so does not reveal the authors' identities. The department's considered view of your case and its views on your prospects for future promotion are also communicated. The goal is to make the letter as informative as possible so you can make appropriate use of it as you move toward your tenure review.

After your review, you should meet with your department chair or SEAS area dean and with the chair of the review committee to discuss the promotion, the feedback provided in the letter, and the assessment of your prospects for tenure. You may also wish to speak with colleagues in the department who have been promoted to associate professor to discuss how they have chosen to follow up on their reviews. Further details about the process for associate reviews can be found in



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the *FAS Appointment and Promotion Handbook* at <http://academic-appointments.fas.harvard.edu/>.¹¹

¹¹ Please note that the six steps discussed above are broken down further into 14 steps in the *FAS Appointment and Promotion Handbook* for administrative purposes.



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Your review for promotion to professor (the only tenured rank at Harvard) ordinarily occurs during the penultimate year of your appointment as associate professor.¹² The criteria for tenure within the FAS are scholarly achievement and impact on the field, evidence of intellectual leadership and creative accomplishment, potential for future accomplishments, teaching and advising effectiveness in a variety of settings with both undergraduate and graduate students, and potential contributions to the University and broader scholarly communities.

The Tenure Review Process

The process for promotion is briefly outlined below. Each step is described in detail directly following the outline.

- (1) **Promotion Dossier:** In the summer¹³ prior to, or at the beginning of, your penultimate year as an associate professor, your department chair or SEAS area dean explains the review process and asks you to provide materials for your promotion dossier.
- (2) **Committee Review:** The chair or area dean, in consultation with the divisional dean, appoints a committee to review your dossier and recommend to the department whether to proceed with the evaluation.
- (3) **External Letters:** The chair or area dean solicits twelve to fifteen external letters, which compare you with four or five leading scholars, at varying career stages, in your field; these external letters assess your scholarly achievements and provide a recommendation as to whether to grant you tenure at Harvard. These letters are included in your dossier and reviewed by the committee.
- (4) **Departmental Vote:** The committee drafts a case statement regarding the strengths and weakness of your materials and shares its findings with the tenured members of your department. The tenured members of your department discuss the case and vote on whether to recommend promotion.
- (5) **Confidential Letters:** After a favorable vote, which does not have to be unanimous but must comprise affirmative votes by a significant majority of the tenured faculty in the department, each tenured member of the department writes a confidential letter to the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS for inclusion in your dossier.
- (6) **Case Statement:** The chair or area dean, together with the chair of the review committee, finalizes the case statement and forwards it, with your dossier, to the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS.
- (7) **CAP Review:** The full FAS Committee on Appointments and Promotions (CAP) reviews your dossier and advises the Edgerley Family Dean on the next steps, which can range from forwarding your case to the President for review by an *ad hoc* committee to determining that it is not strong enough to put forward for further review.
- (8) **Presidential Review:** The President makes the final decision regarding all tenure appointments. To help in making this decision, the President or Provost often presides over an *ad hoc* committee that reviews your case for promotion. External *ad hoc* committee members and departmental “witnesses” are relied on for their expertise in the field.

¹² Associate professors with calendar-year appointments (appointments that end on December 31 in a future year) ordinarily follow a review timetable based on the calendar year. This timing is described in the footnotes.

¹³ For calendar-year appointees, this step occurs during the winter (December/January), prior to or at the beginning of your penultimate year.



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(1) **Promotion Dossier:** In the summer¹⁴ prior to, or at the beginning of, your penultimate year as an Associate Professor, your chair or area dean will meet with you to describe the review process, deadlines for submission of materials, and the timing of various stages of the review. By early September,¹⁵ you should submit the following materials to your department to be included in your dossier:

- A *curriculum vitae*, including a complete bibliography
- Copies of all of your publications (including any that are forthcoming) or other scholarly materials, and (in book fields) all significant reviews of your work. In art-making fields, copies, as appropriate, of all creative works and all significant reviews.
- Teaching and advising materials, including: a list of theses you have supervised, graduate students for whom you have primary responsibility, representative course syllabi, and evidence of teaching effectiveness, such as teaching awards
- A teaching statement, which discusses your teaching approach and philosophy, what you have found effective, ways in which you are striving to improve your teaching, and what you would like to pursue in future courses
- A research statement, which briefly summarizes the work you have already accomplished and how you have contributed to your field, and which lays out your research goals

As with your associate review, you may also include a list of outside scholars whom you would like the department to contact for letters of evaluations and/or a list of scholars whom you feel should not be consulted (and, again, this latter list must include an explanation of why these scholars should not be consulted). The department will consider carefully how best to take this information into account when developing the list of external reviewers.

In preparing for your tenure review, it is important to keep the criteria for tenure in mind. Recall that your reviewers (both internal and external) are looking for scholarly achievement and impact on the field, evidence of intellectual leadership and creative accomplishment, potential for future accomplishments, teaching and advising effectiveness in a variety of settings with both undergraduate and graduate students, and potential contributions to the University and broader scholarly communities. For this reason, it is important to think carefully about the balance between quality and quantity of your work, where and when you publish, and how to make yourself known in your field (both within and outside of Harvard).

¹⁴ For calendar-year appointees, this step occurs during the winter (December/January), prior to or at the beginning of your penultimate year.

¹⁵ By early April, for calendar-year appointees.



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Appropriate venues for publication differ by division, by department, and even by subfield. Some fields value books more than articles, whereas others place more emphasis on peer-reviewed journal and/or conference articles. Publishing a great deal in venues without rigorous review processes will not support a tenure case as much as fewer high-impact articles that are more competitively placed in peer-reviewed venues. The key is defining an original and significant research agenda and directing your energies to maximize the impact and influence of your research. Your colleagues both within and outside of the University are invaluable resources for advice on how to achieve this.

Your colleagues, both within and outside Harvard, can also offer helpful advice on strategies for becoming known in your field in the years prior to your tenure review. The impact you have will depend in part on how well outside scholars come to know your work; moreover, outside evaluators may be more likely to agree to participate in the review process if they already know of your research and teaching. Speaking at conferences and at other institutions is an important avenue to pursue, as is being proactive in inviting scholars to Harvard. Sending out articles or manuscripts when they are ready for external consumption to scholars whose thoughts you would appreciate may also be helpful (even if most people who receive them do not reply). Applying for fellowships elsewhere can also help to get you known beyond the Harvard campus, as can serving on grant panels or as a reviewer for a professional journal.

It is also important to be known within your own department prior to a tenure review. This may seem obvious, but in large departments with distinct subfields, it may be challenging. You should make sure to give at least one talk within your department before you come up for tenure (and you should discuss the timing of this talk with your chair or area dean). You should also have conversations with a wide range of colleagues about your work and theirs; inviting colleagues, both tenured and tenure-track, to have lunch with you is a good way to get to know them.

Although many tenure-track faculty members (and external reviewers) tend to focus on the quality and quantity of research, teaching is also a critical factor in the tenure decision. Teaching is broadly defined in this context and includes courses taught and advising done at the undergraduate and graduate levels. You should think carefully about your teaching each year and offer, as appropriate, a balance of lecture and seminar courses, Gen Ed classes, and graduate seminars. Be mindful of the fact that your dossier will include a summary teaching chart with data on all of the courses you have taught, their enrollments, and any teaching evaluations received. The chair or area dean will also provide a description of your overall teaching profile. You should not solicit letters from students for inclusion in the dossier because this can place them in an awkward position. The chair or area dean will solicit feedback on your teaching and your performance as an adviser of undergraduates and mentor of graduate students.



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(2) **Committee Review:** As with your associate review, the chair or area dean will appoint a review committee consisting of tenured colleagues from your department; the committee should also include a tenured faculty member from another department. The composition of the review committee must be authorized by the divisional dean to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest and that it is sufficiently representative. This committee reviews your materials and then makes a recommendation to the department as to whether to continue with the review. If the department votes not to proceed, the divisional dean must approve the decision. The chair or John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS will then meet with you to discuss that decision; you will also receive a letter, which will have been reviewed by the divisional dean, documenting the outcome.

(3) **External Letters:** If your department recommends further review, the chair or area dean usually solicits letters from external scholars in October or November¹⁶ with a request for responses by the end of December. Tenure promotion dossiers must include twelve to fifteen such letters. Before the chair or area dean sends a letter soliciting the opinions of external scholars, both the solicitation letter and the list of recipients are reviewed by the divisional dean.

The external evaluations help your colleagues determine whether your work has met the FAS standards for tenure. (To see a copy of a standard letter used to solicit external evaluations, please see the *FAS Appointment and Promotion Handbook*: <http://academic-appointments.fas.harvard.edu/>.) To help make this determination, the external reviewers are asked to compare you with other scholars in your field. The reviewers are told explicitly that you are being considered for promotion to tenure and will receive a copy of your CV, a sampling of your work, your research and teaching statements, significant reviews of your work (in book fields and art-making fields), and a link to your website. In contrast, only the links to the websites of those on the comparison list are provided, and reviewers must rely on available materials and their own knowledge of the comparands to comment on their scholarship.

The comparison list consists of scholars who range from the strongest recently tenured scholars to full professors who are well-established leaders in the field. In making comparisons, the external reviewers are asked to take into account the career stages of the comparands and to calibrate responses appropriately. All who review the dossiers (the department, deans, *ad hoc* committee members, the Provost, and the President) are keenly aware of the importance of this calibration and take it very seriously. Because the comparison list includes the top scholars in your field at varying career stages (for example, recently tenured associate professors and full professors who may have many more years of experience than you), it is not necessary for you to be ranked first in absolute terms. Rather, it is important that the external reviewers believe that you compare

¹⁶ Usually in May, with a request for responses by August, for calendar-year appointees.



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favorably to these scholars in intellectual leadership and creative accomplishment, quality of scholarship, and potential for future impact on the field, given your current professional stage.

Because external reviewers will evaluate your scholarly impact and your future trajectory, it is important that they have a very good understanding of your field and the scholars within it. For this reason, they are usually active scholars who are full professors within your field (or fields in interdisciplinary cases). In science and engineering cases, some of the external reviewers may be prestigious senior researchers from a corporation or research institute rather than a university. In certain arts and humanities cases, some of the external reviewers may be well-established museum curators or artists.

(4) **Departmental Vote:** Once the external letters have been received, the review committee discusses the opinions of the external letter writers, reviews your key publications or creative works, your teaching and advising effectiveness, and considers your record in general; they then draft a case statement regarding the strengths and weaknesses of your dossier and share it with the department. The tenured members in your department review all of your materials, along with the statement from the committee, and then meet to discuss your case. After this discussion, the tenured faculty vote on whether the case is strong enough to proceed. If it is not, the chair or area dean must explain this decision to the divisional dean. The chair or John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS will then meet with you to discuss the decision. In this case, you will also receive a letter, which will have been reviewed by the divisional dean, documenting the outcome.

(5) **Confidential Letters:** If a significant majority of the tenured faculty in your department vote to promote you, each of them then writes a confidential letter to the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS. These letters provide an opportunity for each faculty member to explain his or her vote and further voice their views on your case. It also provides the deans with more context for your case and gives them an opportunity to ensure that the process has been fair and representative of the views of a significant majority of the department.

(6) **Case Statement:** The department chair or SEAS area dean, together with the chair of the review committee, finalizes the case statement. This statement includes a summary of the process, a description of your scholarly area and how it fits into the department's academic plan, and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of your work, as noted in the external evaluations and the departmental conversations. This statement is forwarded, with your dossier, to the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS ordinarily by late February.¹⁷

¹⁷ By early October, for calendar-year appointees.



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(7) **CAP Review:** After the Dean receives your dossier, it is reviewed by the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (CAP). The CAP discussion involves the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS, all of the divisional deans (including the John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS), the Danoff Dean of Harvard College, the Dean of the GSAS, the Dean for Faculty Affairs and Planning, the Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Development, the Senior Adviser on Faculty Development, and one additional senior faculty member from each division. CAP's discussion focuses on whether your work has met the standards for tenure within the FAS. Its role is solely advisory to the Edgerley Family Dean. The committee does not vote on appointments or promotions but acts as an experienced set of experts on process and criteria.

After discussing your case, CAP either recommends to the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS that the case should be forwarded to the President and Provost or that it does not meet the FAS standards for tenure. Based on this advice, the Dean decides how to proceed with your case. In the rare instances in which the Dean decides not to forward a case to the President and Provost, he will communicate this decision to the chair of your department or the John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS, who will discuss the outcome with you.

(8) **Presidential Review:** The President makes the final decision regarding all tenure appointments that are forwarded to her for review. An *ad hoc* review is one aspect of this decision-making process. The function of the *ad hoc* committee is to advise the President on whether the candidate's work meets the standards for tenure within the FAS. Either the President or the Provost can preside over an *ad hoc* review committee, which is assembled by the divisional dean in consultation with the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity. The committee usually consists of three active professors from outside Harvard, two active professors at Harvard (who are not from the department making the recommendation), the President or Provost, the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS, the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, and the divisional dean responsible for the case.

Like the external letter writers, the external members of the *ad hoc* committee are active scholars who are full professors and are chosen for their deep understanding of your field. When appropriate, an external member may be a prestigious senior researcher from a corporation or research institute, a well-established artist, or a renowned museum curator. In considering the *ad hoc* membership, the divisional deans and the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity ordinarily do not include external letter writers because the dossier already includes the views of these scholars. (In exceptional cases, an external letter writer may be considered.) They also endeavor to ensure that the *ad hoc* members do not have a conflict of interest with your case, including having been one of your collaborators or mentors.



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At the *ad hoc* committee meeting, several departmental “witnesses” come individually to speak to the committee. These witnesses usually include the department and review committee chairs, one senior faculty member who was in favor of the promotion, and one who voted against it (if any did so). The goal in inviting such witnesses is to ensure that the full range of views within the department is adequately represented.

During the course of the meeting, members of the *ad hoc* committee are invited to participate actively by asking questions of witnesses, as well as by exploring more general questions related to the field. Once the committee has heard from the witnesses, the President or Provost finishes the proceedings with a discussion of the entire case. During this period, the President or Provost asks each member of the committee to summarize his or her views – no votes are taken.

In many cases, the President may seek additional information or advice following the *ad hoc* committee meeting. It is not uncommon for some time to elapse between the *ad hoc* and the President’s decision. In order to protect the candidate from any additional anxiety and to ensure the integrity of the process, all aspects of the President’s deliberations, including the timing of the *ad hoc*, are strictly confidential. Once the President arrives at a decision, the Edgerley Family Dean and divisional dean are informed, and they convey the decision to the department chair or SEAS area dean.

Your department chair or the John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS will inform you of the President’s decision. If it is positive, the process of developing an offer for your tenured position begins almost immediately. If the decision is negative, you will generally have one year (the time remaining on your appointment as associate professor) to find another position. In such cases, the department chair or SEAS area dean and the senior faculty will do all they can to help you find a suitable position at another institution. Note: If, at any point in the review process, the department, the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS advised by CAP, or the President determines that the case should not proceed, the department chair (with the letter first approved by the divisional dean) or the John A. Paulson Dean of SEAS must notify you in writing.

Although this process may seem daunting, the FAS is committed to hiring and mentoring tenure-track faculty who are outstanding both in their scholarship and teaching and have an excellent chance of receiving tenure at Harvard. The FAS has progressively embraced the cultural changes necessary to ensure the success of a tenure-track system. This handbook provides another step in this direction by helping to clarify the process for those undergoing promotion reviews. Further



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details about the process for reviews can be found in the *FAS Appointment and Promotion Handbook* at <http://academic-appointments.fas.harvard.edu/>.¹⁸

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¹⁸ Please note that the eight steps discussed above for internal promotion to tenure are broken down further into 16 steps in the *FAS Appointment and Promotion Handbook* for administrative purposes.

