

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**  
**University of Pittsburgh**  
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**Criteria and Guidelines for Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure**

The Bylaws of the University of Pittsburgh, Chapter II: The Faculty, set the following criteria for promotion to Associate Professor:

*“An associate professor should possess a doctorate or appropriate professional degree and have substantial experience in teaching and research or applicable professional experience. The person should show a capacity and will to maintain teaching effectiveness and the ability for continuing growth as a teacher, scholar, and member of his or her profession. [They] should also have progressed in attaining eminence in a scholarly or professional field. An associate professor must display consistently mature performance in course and curriculum planning, in guiding and counseling students and junior faculty members, and in participating in the activities of the University.”*  
*(Article IV: Full-Time Tenured or Tenure-Stream Faculty, Section 4.4: Criteria for Associate Professor)*

In addition, the Bylaws of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences set the following criteria:

*“Within the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, tenure is awarded for demonstrated excellence together with the promise of continued excellence in scholarship, in whatever form that scholarship takes. Teaching and research (or creative activity), the two principal functions of the University, are also the two principal forms of scholarship. The relationship between the two is complex, and no single formula could serve as an adequate guide in every tenure case... Excellence in research should not excuse incompetence in teaching, and teaching that is not founded in scholarship can make no claim to excellence.*

*In judging excellence, the indispensable ingredient for promotion to tenured rank should be creative or intellectual vitality as reflected in the candidate's teaching, and in the candidate's contribution to the advancement of knowledge or in his or her artistic activity. Vitality is best revealed through the candidate's activities—classroom performance, research, writings, artistic creations. These should be assessed for the evidence they reveal of intellectual power and originality. Quantitative measures of productivity and popularity, however useful, are no substitutes for qualitative judgments. Evaluations of the candidate's record of achievement will be used primarily to judge future promise. Elements of this evaluation shall include the quality and originality of the candidate's contributions to the advancement of knowledge, the candidate's status with respect to the standards of excellence in the discipline, and performance as a teacher. Tenure is not a reward for past services, but a kind of*

*contract, a lifetime of security in exchange for a lifetime of continued creative scholarship.”*

Finally, the language included in the template used for request of external letters of evaluation for promotion to associate professor reads:

*“It may be helpful for you to know that the Bylaws of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences set the criteria for the award of tenure as “... demonstrated excellence together with the promise of continued excellence in scholarship, in whatever form that scholarship takes....” In judging excellence in research we place great weight on the candidate's accomplishments to date, the intellectual power and originality that are revealed by those accomplishments, and the impact that these accomplishments have had on the discipline. And for those candidates whose work is interdisciplinary, collaborative, multidisciplinary or translational in character, or whose intellectual contributions and innovation are registered in part through significant societal impact, we ask that special care be taken to establish achievement. We are, of course, keenly interested in the candidate's promise of future growth and productivity.”*

The Department of Economics follows the University and the School of Arts and Sciences Bylaws and applies them using the following process:

- In most cases a new assistant professor is hired for a three-year contract, which is renewable for another three years, after which they either get a one-year non-renewable contract or are promoted to tenure. This tenure clock may be paused due to a family or professional leave. Assistant professors can take at most one professional leave prior to promotion to associate professor.
- The department chair assigns a faculty mentor to each newly hired assistant professor. Faculty mentors are asked to familiarize themselves with the work of the assistant professor, to stand ready to provide counsel on professional matters when necessary, and to assist to the extent possible in assuring that the assistant professor is well integrated with the department and the professional community.
- A successful case for tenure requires research excellence, which should be reflected in a record of high-quality publications. Each assistant professor should discuss with their mentor these expectations, and make sure they are on track to produce a research portfolio deserving of tenure.
- In addition to the scheduled reviews discussed below, tenured faculty meet annually in the spring term to discuss the CV of each assistant professor, assessing their progress towards promotion. In exceptional cases the tenured faculty may recommend an assistant professor being considered for tenure ahead of schedule.
- During the third year on the tenure clock each assistant professor will submit a dossier of their research, teaching, and service to the department which will be reviewed by the tenured faculty. The tenured faculty will vote on renewal and provide feedback on the progress toward tenure; this feedback is then communicated to the assistant professor by the department chair.
- A more exhaustive review, including outside letters, usually takes place in the fall of the assistant professor's sixth year. At the end of the previous spring, after the tenured faculty

recommend proceeding with promotion, the chair will appoint an *ad-hoc* committee, typically formed by two tenured faculty. This committee, in consultation with the Chair, selects external letter writers and, after letters are received, prepares a recommendation report.

- The dossier for promotion is assembled following the guidelines by the Dietrich School. The full dossier and the *ad-hoc* committee report are circulated among tenured faculty, who review the documentation, meet to discuss the merits of the case, and vote.
- Assessment of progress towards promotion is a qualitative judgement of the tenured faculty, including the following aspects:
  - A strong publication record, assessed as a combination of quantity and quality of published peer-reviewed papers.
  - A pipeline of working papers and work in progress, reflecting a promise of continued research activity.
  - Evidence of scholarship engagement through participation in conferences, seminars, and refereeing activity.
  - Evidence of teaching excellence, including student feedback and peer evaluations.
  - Evidence of involvement in mentoring and advising students.
  - Evidence of service involvement in the department and the profession.