



General Guidelines for NTT Promotion Review

(Effective for FY27 promotion/reviews)

PROVISIONAL

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR NON-TENURE-TRACK (NTT) PROMOTION REVIEW

The primary responsibility for faculty review lies within the candidate's department and college. Departments and colleges are responsible for developing policies and procedures defining the standards and criteria for the review of promotion eligible NTT faculty members seeking promotion in rank and/or the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA). These standards and criteria shall be consistent with prevailing standards of excellence in their own disciplines, with college review policies taking precedence over departmental review policies.

Prior to the end of each academic year, the Office of the Provost shall contact each college and provide a list of promotion eligible NTT faculty members who are scheduled for a mandatory review (including mandatory third year pre-promotion review) during the upcoming academic year. The colleges will be responsible for alerting their individual promotion eligible faculty members that they are subject to review during the upcoming academic year. In addition, the Office of the Provost will provide instructions to the colleges on how to access the NTT Promotion SharePoint Site used to assemble the candidate's promotion packet and manage the review process.

It should be noted that all mandatory reviews must be completed and submitted by the College through the NTT Promotion SharePoint site to the Office of the Provost by March 1.

Steps in the review process include department committee, department chair, college committee, dean, and Office of the Provost. If votes of all eligible faculty in a department or college step are part of the process, they must be incorporated into the department and/or college committee review steps, respectively, so that the candidate has the opportunity to provide a response if the recommendation is negative. Acquisition of appropriate review letters precedes the internal review steps. Only letters/endorsements/reviews from officially selected reviewers and those from each internal step in the review process are allowed. No extraneous letters or materials are permitted. A letter containing the recommendation and justification in narrative form is required at each internal step in the process and must be provided to the candidate before the next step in the process initiates and with enough time that the candidate can provide a response if the recommendation was negative (see Section 4).

Section 1 Departmental and/or College NTT Promotion Guidelines

Departmental/college guidelines for the review of promotion eligible NTT faculty members will be reviewed by the departments/colleges, and if necessary updated, on an annual basis. Any changes or updates to departmental and/or college NTT promotion guidelines should be forwarded to the Office of the Provost for approval by May 1 of the academic year prior to when the changes will become effective. These guidelines will also be made available to promotion eligible NTT faculty candidates for promotion through the NTT Promotion SharePoint site maintained by the Office of the Provost. The NTT Promotion SharePoint site will be available to begin assembling the candidate's electronic promotion

packet beginning at the end of the spring semester prior to the academic year in which the review will take place.

These review guidelines are designed to assure that the highest academic and professional standards are maintained and that due process is followed. Due process consists of two elements. First, promotion eligible NTT faculty candidates have the right to know what is expected of them to be promoted and/or granted a renewable employment agreement (REA). Second, candidates have the right to be heard, to clarify vagueness, and/or correct factual errors before any recommendation is forwarded to the next step of review. Best practice includes providing a copy of the internal review letter at each step to the candidate prior to finalizing it in order to provide opportunity for the candidate to request corrections of errors of fact only, not to request revisions to opinions or judgement. The review guidelines will be made available to all promotion eligible NTT faculty members in the department and/or college upon hiring, as well as being publicly posted on the department/college website.

Section 2 Departmental and/or College Review Criteria

NTT promotion reviews at all steps in the departmental and college levels must be based on written NTT promotion criteria and standards that have been developed by the department/college previously approved by the Office of the Provost. These policies should state the criteria for promotion in academic rank of promotion eligible NTT faculty members and shall provide examples of the types of evidence required to demonstrate that those criteria have been met. Review guidelines should clearly state the expectations for a NTT faculty member to be successfully promoted, but should also clearly articulate the similarities and differences in those expectations as it relates to the promotion of NTT faculty members compared to promotion tenured/tenure-track (T/TT) faculty members.

Section 3 Departmental and/or College Committee Composition

Departmental and college faculty committees responsible for NTT promotion review may be made up of both tenured and promotion eligible NTT faculty members but must include at a minimum one promotion eligible NTT faculty member in the same career track as the candidate (i.e., instructional, clinical, or research) but of higher rank. The NTT review committee should have a minimum of five (5) members. This requirement does not preclude a department and/or college from constituting a NTT promotion review committee that includes more than one NTT faculty member as laid out in departmental and/or college bylaws.

To ensure NTT faculty representation, if a department does not have promotion eligible NTT faculty members of a higher rank to serve on the departmental review committee the Dean of the college may appoint promotion eligible faculty members from separate departments within the college to serve on the review committee. In cases where a college does not have promotion eligible NTT faculty members of higher rank to serve, the Dean may appoint promotion eligible NTT faculty members from different colleges to serve on the NTT promotion review committee(s). In such cases, the appointed member

must be a promotion eligible faculty member of higher rank than the NTT candidate seeking promotion, be in the same NTT career track as the candidate (i.e., instructional, clinical, or research) and be drawn from a similar academic department and/or discipline at UH.

Section 4 **NTT Promotion Review Process**

Committee recommendations must include the name, rank, and title of each member of the review committee. Committee deliberations shall be conducted in confidence. The committee will make written recommendations based on the content of the promotion packet. Committee recommendations will be shared with the candidate and the appropriate administrator at each step of review, prior to moving the promotion packet forward to the next step of review. Department chairs and Deans will conduct independent reviews and make written recommendations based on an examination of all promotion packet materials, including letters of review and committee findings. Written recommendations from department chairs and/or Deans will be shared with the candidate, prior to moving the promotion packet to the next step of review.

Faculty members who participate in or vote on a promotion eligible NTT faculty member's promotion packet at one review step shall not participate in or vote on that candidate a second time at a higher step of review. Each subsequent review body is responsible for considering any procedural problems it identifies in the prior review and for making every effort to correct any errors caused by those problems.

In the case of a promotion eligible NTT faculty member initially appointed at the associate or full rank, a mandatory review for the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA) will normally be held during the final year of a four-year probationary period. The review shall follow the format and criteria required for a promotion review to the rank at which the renewable employment agreement (REA) will be granted. If the review for the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA) includes a promotion in rank from associate to full, the review shall follow the format and criteria required for a promotion to full NTT professor.

Evaluated candidates, at each internal step of review, should review the recommendation. Errors of fact should be reported within 5 (five) working days to the reviewer(s) (e.g., if the internal reviewer(s) indicates 15 first author publications but the factually accurate count is different, etc.). The internal reviewer(s) should make every effort to quickly correct verifiable errors of fact. In cases of a negative recommendation and if desired, provide a brief written response to the recommendation within five (5) business days after receipt of each notice of review recommendations. Responses must not exceed 5 (five) single-spaced pages and be uploaded by Faculty Affairs (facultyaffairs@uh.edu) as an update to the Promotion Sharepoint site. In the response, the candidate may not question the professional judgement of the review body/administrator. The candidate response to the negative recommendation should not be sent to the person or committee who made the negative recommendation. Any such responses will become a part of the candidate's review dossier and will

be considered together with all other dossier materials at all subsequent steps of the review. If the decision from the Provost Office is negative, the candidate may request reconsideration of that decision in writing within ten (10) business days. Further, the candidate may request a reconsideration hearing with the Provost Office. Reconsiderations and reconsideration hearings are only available at the Provost Office step of review.

After the Office of the Provost has made a final decision on promotion in rank and/or the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA), if negative, candidates may appeal the decision to the University Grievance Committee within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the decision from the Office of the Provost. Any appeal must be based on errors of fact or a lack of due process afforded to the faculty member during the NTT promotion process, but cannot challenge the professional judgment of the review committees and administrators involved in the promotion review process. The University Grievance Committee will review the appeal and make a recommendation to the Office of the Provost.

The Office of the Provost's decision on whether to grant the recommendations from the University Grievance Committee in relation to the appeal is the final institutional step in this matter and shall not be subject to further review or grievance proceedings.

Section 5 **Process for Mandatory and Non-Mandatory NTT Promotion Reviews**

(a) NTT Pre-Promotion Review

Promotion eligible NTT faculty members at the assistant rank are required to undergo a thorough pre-promotion review normally conducted during the third year of the probationary period. In the case of current NTT faculty members who transitioned into a promotion eligible NTT faculty position and who are currently in the fourth or fifth year of their probationary period, while it is not required that a retrospective third year mandatory pre-promotion review be carried out, these faculty members are encouraged to discuss the possibility of undergoing a voluntary pre-promotion review with their chair in preparation for their mandatory promotion review.

The pre-promotion review is managed at the department/academic unit level and will not utilize the NTT Promotion SharePoint site utilized for NTT promotion reviews managed by the Office of the Provost. Assembling the pre-promotion review packet is the responsibility of the candidate being reviewed. The format of the pre-promotion review packet should follow that of a mandatory promotion review packet except that there is no requirement for reviewer letters to be included. Please see instructions for assembling the promotion review packet described on the NTT Policy page of the Office of the Provost website (<https://www.uh.edu/provost/faculty/policies-and-procedures/faculty-policies/non-tenure-track/>).

In accordance with departmental/college criteria utilized for promotion of NTT faculty members, the appropriate department committee, department chair, college committee and then dean will conduct

separate and independent reviews of the pre-promotion review performance. At each internal step in the review of the pre-promotion review process, a letter will be provided to the candidate detailing the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-promotion review performance. The pre-promotion review packet and all review letters should be filed in the college with a copy forwarded to the Office of Faculty Affairs for inclusion in the faculty member's Faculty Folder and subsequently becomes a part of the mandatory promotion review process at the appropriate time.

The timeline for conducting the pre-promotion review during the third year of the probationary period will be determined by the department/college with the caveat that it must be completed before March 1 of the academic year in which the third year review was required.

(b) Mandatory NTT Promotion Review

Promotion eligible NTT faculty members are required to undergo a mandatory review prior to the end of their probationary period. In the case of a promotion eligible NTT faculty member appointed at the assistant NTT professor rank, a mandatory review will normally be held during the sixth year of their probationary period. If successful in their review, a newly promoted associate NTT professor will be eligible for the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA) at the beginning of the subsequent academic year, as outlined in the NTT policy.

In the case of a promotion eligible NTT faculty member initially appointed at the associate or full NTT professor rank, a mandatory review for the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA) will normally be held during the third year of a four-year probationary period. The review shall follow the format and criteria normally required to award a renewable employment agreement (REA) with promotion to the rank the faculty was initially appointed at (i.e., associate or full NTT professor). If the review includes a promotion in rank from associate to full, the review shall follow the format and criteria required for a promotion to full NTT professor.

The Office of the Provost is responsible for creating and providing appropriate access to the required folders within the NTT Promotion SharePoint site for the candidates and the appropriate steps of review. Once created, the Office of the Provost will then contact the candidates to inform them that they may now upload their promotion packet materials to the NTT Promotion SharePoint site.

The timeline for conducting the mandatory promotion review, including time for candidate responses, will be determined by the department/college with the caveat that it must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Provost before March 1 of the academic year in which the mandatory review was required.

(c) Non-Mandatory NTT Promotion Review

The expectation is that a promotion eligible NTT faculty member who has been promoted to associate NTT professor rank with a renewable employment agreement (REA) will in due course seek promotion to full NTT professor rank. The normative time period for an associate NTT professor before being

promoted to NTT professor varies due to different expectations in different disciplines. Promotion reviews considered prior to the sixth year after promotion to or hire at the Associate level are considered accelerated. Candidates who request accelerated review of promotion should ensure that they have developed a track record of performance that is truly exceptional in all appropriate domains at the University of Houston at their current rank. Candidates seeking a non-mandatory promotion review should discuss their readiness for promotion with their department chair and/or Dean prior to applying for promotion. The timeline for a non-mandatory NTT promotion review shall follow that used for mandatory review.

Section 6 Instructions for Obtaining Reviewer Letters for NTT Promotion

The department chair (or Dean if applicable) is responsible for obtaining a minimum of three (3) reviewer letters for promotion eligible NTT faculty members seeking a promotion in rank and/or the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA).

Reviewers should be clearly qualified based on their professional experience and expertise to comment on the performance of the candidate in the candidate's primary professional domain. As such, reviewers should hold or have held an academic appointment at the university level (at the rank to which promotion is being sought) that includes at a minimum the professional responsibilities on which the reviewer has been asked to comment.

Promotion to the rank of NTT associate professor requires a minimum of three (3) reviewer letters. At least one reviewer letter must be from outside the home department/academic unit. The remaining review letters can be obtained from within the university including from qualified individuals in the home department/academic unit. Letters from reviewers outside the university (external "arms-length" reviewers) may be used but are not required in the case of promotion from NTT assistant to NTT associate professor.

Promotion to the rank of NTT full professor requires a minimum of four (4) reviewer letters, with a requirement for at least one of the reviewer letters to come from an external "arms-length" reviewer. The remaining reviewer letters may be from within the university including from within the home college and department. Any and all reviewer letters received must be included in the promotion review packet.

Reviewer letters (either internal or external to UH) will not be accepted from NTT review committee members at any step of the review process. In addition, reviewer letters will not be accepted from prior supervisors, Co-PIs, co-authors or collaborators who appear on grants, publications and/or academic projects with the candidate either internal or external to UH. In the case of external "arms-length" reviews, requests for reviews from thesis or dissertation advisors, co-authors, or former students are not considered to be "arms-length" and will not be considered. A department may request more than three (3) reviewer letters but no more than a total of six (6). Candidates will not be shown or have access to reviewer letters as part of the NTT promotion process. The candidate must be asked to

provide the department chair (or Dean if applicable) with the names of up to three potential reviewers, for Assistant to Associate promotion reviews, or up to four for Associate to Full promotion reviews. While the department chair (or Dean if applicable) will choose the reviewers, an effort will be made to select a portion of the reviewers from the recommendations made by the candidate, not to exceed half of the total number of reviewers. However, the final choice of reviewers remains with the department chair (or Dean if applicable).

In the case of a promotion eligible (PE) NTT faculty member undergoing a mandatory review for promotion to the NTT associate professor rank and the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA), reviewers may be either tenured or NTT faculty members holding the associate professor rank or higher. In the case of a promotion eligible NTT faculty member undergoing a review for promotion to the NTT full professor rank, reviewers may be either tenured or NTT faculty members holding the full professor rank. In the case of a promotion eligible (PE) NTT faculty member who was appointed at the associate or full professor rank and is undergoing a mandatory review for the award of a renewable employment agreement (REA), reviewers may be either tenured or promotion eligible NTT faculty members with an REA holding the equivalent rank or higher. Regardless of academic rank, the reviewer must be appropriately qualified to provide an objective review of the candidate's performance and accomplishments in the professional domain(s) in which the NTT faculty candidate holds their faculty appointment.

The candidate's electronic folder must contain one sample copy of the letter sent to reviewers requesting a review, and a one-paragraph description of the qualifications of each reviewer with any relationship of the reviewer to the candidate clearly stated. The department chair (or Dean if applicable) will be responsible for uploading these reviewer documents to the NTT Promotion SharePoint site. Letters to potential reviewers should include the candidate's full CV, a brief description of the candidate's role within the department, and how this is related to the department's mission. Letters should also specify a date for return of the evaluation.

Please also include the following or substantially similar statements in your solicitations for external reviews. The second statement is only relevant for probationary faculty who have had extensions in their probationary period.

Our college and university policies provide that external evaluations are kept confidential; however, please be advised that universities are sometimes required to release external review letters as a result of legal action or requirements.

If the candidate for promotion from Instructional/Clinical/Research Assistant Professor to Instructional/Clinical/Research Associate Professor has more than five years at the Instructional/Clinical/Research Assistant Professor rank, they may have had extensions in their probationary period for approved reasons and should be reviewed as if they had only five years in rank.

When requesting evaluations, the department chair should include the following questions in the letter requesting the review from potential reviewers both internal and external to UH:

- 1) *What is the nature of your professional contact with and knowledge of the candidate?*
- 2) *Does the candidate's work, taken as a whole, constitute a serious and significant contribution to the discipline?*
- 3) *What is your assessment of the candidate's contributions in the primary domain in which the faculty member holds their academic appointment (e.g. student teaching/instructional activities, research/scholarship/creative activity, clinical instruction/patient care, etc.)?*
- 4) *What is your assessment of the candidate's contributions outside of the primary domain in which the faculty member holds their academic appointment to the overall mission of the department, college, university, and/or profession?*
- 5) *Does the reviewer recommend a promotion?*