Promotion Related Frequently Asked Questions and Answers  
(Promotion FAQ)

In order to enhance the efficiency and fairness of the promotion process, this document provides answers to questions frequently asked by promotion applicants (Section A) and promotion committees (Section B) regarding the “old” promotion process, and questions regarding the new synchronized promotion process (Section C). To promote the greater understanding on both sides of the process, applicants and committee members should read both sections.

Applicants should direct questions or concerns to the Personnel Policies Committee chair. Promotion committee members should direct questions or concerns to their Promotion Committee chair. If the chair of their promotion committee cannot answer the question, the promotion committee chair will contact the Personnel Policies Committee chair.

Section A. Application-related Questions and Answers

**Question A1**: Should I include a copy of my department’s definition of research?

*Answer*: Yes. If your department has a definition of research, it can be included in your application. It should be on a separate sheet of paper attached at the end of your application. Since different departments have different definitions it is important to include yours so that college and all-university committees can judge your application by the appropriate standards. The page with the definition does not count in the five-page narrative limit.

**Question A2**: The application indicates that I cannot include information from the current academic year in the application. Are activities from the summer prior to application considered prior year or current year information?

*Answer*: For purposes of the promotion application, the “current year” begins on the Fall semester contract start date. Thus, any information regarding activities prior to the Fall Semester contract start date may be included in the promotion application. For example, if you are notified in June before you apply that you had an article accepted for publication, you are permitted to include that acceptance in your application.

**Question A3**: I am a tenured faculty member applying for promotion. The application requires me to provide performance ratings for the three prior years. Since I have not received a new performance rating during that time, should I give the last three performance ratings irrespective of when they occurred instead?

*Answer*: No. The promotion committee is evaluating your performance during a specific time period. You should give the performance ratings for the three prior years, regardless of whether there was a new performance evaluation or not. For example, an applicant last evaluated in 2005-06 applying for promotion in 2009 would use the 05-06 performance rating for all three years 08-09, 07-08, and 06-07.
**Question A4:** I took a six-week maternity/paternity leave of absence during the relevant time period considered for promotion. Does this mean I am short this amount of time in rank and I must either apply by exception or wait a year to apply?

Answer: No. Federal Law requires employers to grant such requests and they are not a significant amount of time given the overall time in rank concern. However, time in rank is lost if the leave is for a semester or year.

**Question A5:** What does “other pertinent education” mean?

Answer: It refers to official accredited coursework beyond your last degree. Here are two examples. 1. An applicant with a M.A. working on a Ph.D. can list relevant courses completed. 2. An applicant whose profession requires continued education for licensure can list relevant courses.

**Question A6:** Should I use bullet point lists to indicate my accomplishments or should I describe all my activities and accomplishments in narrative sentences and paragraphs?

Answer: You should use whatever methods best enable you to highlight your qualifications for promotion. So, for example, just listing the ten committees you have served on under service does not provide the committee with very helpful information. You likely do not have space to explain everything you did on every committee, but it is advisable to explain what your most significant accomplishments or contributions were to some of the committees that make your work worthy of promotion.

**Question A7:** Should I accept the invitation to appear before the committee?

Answer: You are not obligated to accept the invitation and declining it cannot be held against you. However, if there are any aspects of your application that are out of the ordinary or otherwise may need explanation, it is highly advisable to accept. Even if you do not have any unusual aspects, it is usually helpful to accept the invitation just to offer committee members a chance to ask you questions about your application.

**Question A8:** I am having trouble including all the information I want within the five-page limit. May I use the Landscape page layout or small font to point size to include more information?

Answer: All applications must be typed in a minimum of Calibri or Times New Roman 10 point and use standard one inch margins. Applications that do not meet this standard will be eliminated from consideration. The Landscape page layout may be used, but the use of two columns is recommended for readability.

**Section B: Committee-related Questions and Answers**

**Question B1:** Should a promotion committee vote on its recommendations in closed session?

Answer: No. Per Wisconsin Open Meeting laws, discussion of the applications should occur in closed session, but the final recommendation and report of the committee must be voted on in open session.

Updated 12/01/15
**Question B2:** Can a promotion committee meet in open session, go into closed session, and then go back into open session to conduct further business (such as its final vote?)

Answer: Yes. Per Wisconsin Open Meeting Laws, this is permissible so long as the agenda distributed to the public before the meeting indicates this sequence will occur.

**Question B3:** May an applicant introduce additional materials or documents during the meeting with the committee?

Answer: No. Applicants are only allowed to bring their five-page application to the meeting for reference. See FASLAH 3-123, Promotion: Conduct of the Committee Meeting, item 4. The only exception is the statement of an appeal. See FASLAH 3-125, Promotion: Applicant’s Response to Recommendations (Appeals).

**Question B4:** May a committee communicate any information about candidates verbally or in writing to the next level committee outside of the officially prescribed procedures and documents?

Answer: No. Communication between committees should be restricted to the FASLAH prescribed recommendations and reports.

**Question B5:** What should the committee include in its reports to the next level committee?

Answer: Only the officially prescribed information indicated in FASLAH and the promotion packet, most notably, the committee’s procedures, vote, rankings, and justifications. Minutes of open or closed session meetings are not forwarded to the next level committee.

**Question B6:** What should the committee do with minutes of its open and closed sessions?

Answer: The chair and vice chair of the committee each should keep a copy in case questions or concerns arise.

**Question B7:** A candidate is unable to meet with the committee during the time scheduled. Is the committee obligated to arrange a new meeting to accommodate the candidate’s schedule?

Answer: Applicants should make every reasonable effort to attend the meeting as proposed by the committee. At the same time, committees are expected to make reasonable accommodations for applicants with special needs, for example, a conflict with a night class, an illness or car accident, or the like. Any rescheduling must be completed in time for the committee to meet its deadlines.

**Question B8:** A committee discovers a content error (not just a typo) on the official promotion form that materially affects the application (for example, the years in rank is understated so the applicant becomes a candidate by exception). Should the error be overlooked or should the application be eliminated from further consideration?

Answer: The error must be verified. If verified, the application should be eliminated from further consideration. It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure the information contained in their application is accurate.
Question B9: A committee discovers a content error (not just a typo) in the five-page statement by the applicant. For example, a candidate mistakenly reports membership on a committee in 2009 when the candidate actually served in 2008. What should the committee do?

Answer: The error must be verified. If verified, the mistaken claim should be eliminated from consideration. If the candidate is recommended for promotion to the next level, the error should be communicated to the next level committee.

Question B10: Are promotions by exception due to less than the minimum time in rank or terminal degree permitted?

Answer: Yes, although they are to be rare. The Handbook specifically allows for committees to recommend applications by exception for promotion. See FASLAH “Definition of Promotion” 3-117-118 and “Promotion: Procedures” 3-120.

Question B11: An applicant files an appeal with the next level committee chair. The chair believes the appeal does not have merit. Should the chair pass along the appeal to the committee?

Answer: Yes. Committee chairs are not empowered to make judgments about the merits of an appeal. It is for the committee to decide whether the appeal is successful or not and respond to the appellant as prescribed by FASLAH. Should promotion applications be required to include information about student evaluations of teaching?

Question B12: Should appeals include the original application with the appeal?

Answer: Yes.

Question B13: Should appeal decisions occur before other substantive committee decisions?

Answer: Yes.

Question B14: Should promotion applications be required to include information about student evaluations of teaching?

Answer: No. Information about student evaluations should be included in promotion applications. In case specific evaluations are missing, the application will not be rejected.

Question B15: What are the confidentiality requirements for committee members in the promotion process?

Answer: Nothing said in an open meeting is confidential. The application, appeals, anything said in closed meetings, communications between committees and with the PPC chair are all confidential. However, the chair should be able to explain to the candidate specific reasons why the application was not recommended for promotion.

Question 16: Can any type of ranking information be included in narratives passed on to higher level committees?

Answer: No. Ranking has been eliminated. Committees should avoid any comparisons of applicants.

Updated 12/01/15
Question B17: Should applicants be required to include their job description with their promotion application?

Answer: No. Applicants can choose to include it in their 5-page narrative.

Section C: Simultaneous tenure/promotion to Associate Professor

Question C1: Can I be promoted to Associate Professor and tenured at the same time?

Answer: As a general rule, faculty appointed at the Assistant Professor level are promoted to Associate Professor simultaneously with the granting of tenure. This is only as long as they meet the minimum degree, time in rank, and experience criteria as specified in FASLAH.

Question C2: I don’t meet the minimum degree, time in rank, and experience criteria as specified in FASLAH but am applying for tenure. Can I still be promoted?

Answer: Yes, but you would have to apply for promotion through the regular process by exception.

Question C3: I have received tenure, but wasn’t promoted because I didn’t meet minimum degree, time in rank, and experience criteria as specified in FASLAH at that time. However, recently I did meet these minimum requirements for promotion. Can I still be promoted automatically?

Answer: Yes, please fill out the form, “Link to Qualtrics Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor Application” and submit it in the time specified on the Promotion Timeline. You do not need to submit a separate five page narrative normally associated with promotion applications. The promotion will not take effect until all promotions are approved at the summer Board of Regents meeting.

Question C4: How and when do I apply for simultaneous promotion with tenure if I meet minimum degree, time in rank, and experience criteria as specified in FASLAH?

Answer: Complete the “Link to Qualtrics Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor Application” and submit these items with your tenure materials. Consult your department or functional equivalent and FASLAH for relevant criteria for promotion. You do not need to submit a separate five page narrative normally associated with promotion applications. The promotion will not take effect until all promotions are approved at the summer Board of Regents meeting.

Question C5: Can I apply early for promotion before I have tenure?

Answer: All faculty members hired before August 2014 have this option using the old rules. Faculty hired after August 2014 would have to apply for promotion by exception to be considered early.