

Approved December 21, 2007

**DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS**  
**RPT Procedures and Criteria for Tenure Track Faculty**

**PURPOSE**

The Physics Department is committed to excellence in teaching and research and diligence in service. We expect that a faculty member, before being granted tenure, will have demonstrated the capability of performing high quality, externally acclaimed research, will have performed in the classroom at a level that is of significant benefit to his or her students, and will have shown the ability and willingness to be effective in service to the Department and university.

We expect that a faculty member, before being promoted to Professor, will have validated the promise shown in teaching and research on the basis of which he or she was granted tenure, and will continue in valuable service to the Department, college and university.

With regard to tenure and promotion, the Physics Department is fully committed to giving equal opportunity to all individuals on its faculty.

Post-tenure reviews of faculty members in the rank of Professor are governed by different procedures, which this document does not address. The criteria used in those reviews are the same as those given here.

**PROCEDURES**

The following are procedures for reviewing faculty members who are candidates for promotion, retention, and/or tenure.

1. Timing of Informal Reviews

In the absence of a formal review, an informal review will be conducted each year for all faculty members below the rank of Professor and all faculty without tenure. Outside letters are not solicited for informal reviews. When an informal review is conducted, a recommendation will be made by the full Advisory Committee, based on all information presented, as to whether the next year's review shall be an informal review or a timely formal review as provided in paragraph 2 below. The full Advisory Committee may also initiate a triggered formal review in the subsequent year, as described in PPM 9-5.1 Sec. 2.B.2.b.

2. Timing of Formal Reviews

Formal reviews for retention will be conducted for Assistant Professors during their third probationary year. This review is of the nature of a progress review. Normally, a formal review for possible tenure and promotion will be conducted during the candidate's sixth year.

It is Departmental policy not to recommend tenure for an Assistant Professor without also recommending promotion to Associate Professor.

For an Associate Professor hired without tenure a formal review for retention will be conducted during the third probationary year. This review is of the nature of a progress review. A formal review for possible tenure will be conducted during the candidate's fourth or fifth year.

Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor is based on the candidate's achievements and

visibility and not on the number of years in the rank of Associate Professor. A formal review for promotion can be initiated by the candidate or upon recommendation of the RPT advisory committee. At the discretion of the Department Chair, each fifth annual review of a tenured Associate Professor, whether formal or informal may serve as the tenured faculty review required by PPM 8-3, Sec. 5.C.

A formal review for tenure may take place earlier than the end of the normal probationary period because the candidate has obtained credit for prior service and/or the candidate has demonstrated extraordinary progress, as provided by University Policies and Procedures 8-6 Sec. 3.C.1. The Department Chair shall notify candidates of the procedure for shortening the probationary period.

After a faculty member has formally accepted a position in the Department and seeks credit for prior service in any probationary year, he or she must provide written notice and supporting evidence by the date set by the Department Chair. Such credit must be approved by the candidate's full Advisory Committee before an early formal review for tenure can be initiated. If a candidate elects to waive credit for prior service and revert to the normal tenure calendar, he or she must notify the Department Chair in writing before the subcommittee meets to select external reviewers. A candidate seeking an early review for tenure because of extraordinary progress must notify the Department Chair by the date set by the Department Chair. As provided in PPM 8-6 Sec. 3.C.1, if a candidate is reviewed formally for early tenure and is unsuccessful, he or she may have only one more Departmental vote for tenure.

### 3. Departmental RPT Advisory Committee

The Departmental RPT Advisory Committee for a candidate consists of all voting-eligible regular faculty members as provided in University Policies and Procedures PPM 9-5.1 Sec. 2.A.3.a with the following exceptions: (1) Even though they are not permitted to vote according to PPM, nontenured Associate Professors may participate in the consideration of the retention and tenure of Assistant Professors. (2) Likewise, nontenured full Professors may participate in the review of Associate Professors.

### 4. RPT Subcommittee

A subcommittee is appointed for each candidate according to procedures specified in 6 below. The subcommittee has the responsibility of insuring that all data for the candidate is collected and made available to the Advisory Committee. It is the principal data-gathering unit for the RPT process, assisted by the Departmental administration.

All formal reviews require outside letters. In the case of formal reviews, the subcommittee will meet and create its own list of possible reviewers, consulting with the candidate and whomever else they feel is appropriate. The list of reviewers whose evaluations are finally obtained should represent both those suggested by the candidate, and those suggested by the subcommittee. The list of reviews finally obtained should have a minimum of six names (three in the case of the third-year progress review) with no more than 1/3 suggested by the candidate. The reviewers should be knowledgeable about the candidate's work and be experts in the field. Since letters from former advisors and current co-PI's are routinely praising, they may be solicited at the discretion of the subcommittee, but they should not be counted in the required minimum number.

The subcommittee will arrange for visits to a candidate's class if it determines they are needed, and it will determine what additional information should be sought from the candidate or elsewhere relevant to the review. All of this information should be obtained in a timely manner. The Advocate should at all times be informed about the candidate and his or her work, so that he or she can answer questions that may arise.

The subcommittee will prepare a report to the full Advisory Committee with a recommendation, and

reasons for that recommendation, addressing all of the criteria below.

5. Appointment of the Chair of the RPT Advisory Committee

At a meeting early in the Spring semester the Policy Board will nominate one or more faculty members to be Chair of the RPT Advisory Committee. The Chair will be formally elected in a Departmental meeting shortly thereafter. The previous Chair, if available, will serve until the new Chair is elected. Otherwise one of the nominees, chosen by the Departmental Policy Board, will serve.

6. Appointment of the RPT Subcommittee

In April the Department Policy Board [Executive Committee] will propose a subcommittee for each candidate to be reviewed the following fall. Normally, the subcommittee consists of three regular faculty members, one of whom is designated as the subcommittee chair, and another of whom is designated as an advocate, and is chosen by the candidate. All subcommittee members must be eligible to participate in the deliberations on that candidate. [For example, a tenured Associate Professor would require Professors as members.] The advocate's role is to represent the candidate, be familiar with his or her work and file, answer questions, etc. Therefore, it is incumbent on the advocate to discuss these matters with the candidate in advance of the Departmental meetings

At the time the subcommittees are formed, it should be determined by the Chair of the RPT Advisory Committee which of the reviews must be, or are likely to be, formal. For formal reviews, a list of three suggested reviewers should be solicited from the candidate. An action for tenure, promotion or non-retention can be done only in a formal review. Candidates should be notified by the Department Chair that they have the right to request a formal review during any annual review period.

At a faculty meeting in the Spring, the faculty should approve these subcommittees. At that meeting it is customary to vote whether or not to invite the Departmental Chair to participate in the RPT meetings. The schedule for the RPT meetings should be announced at that time.

7. Notice to Candidates and SAC

At the same time as the subcommittees are proposed, the Departmental Chair will notify each candidate of the RPT process, and of the candidate's responsibilities to provide data [CV, choice of Advocate, list of proposed reviewers, etc.]. The Department Chair will solicit from the candidate, in the written format specified by the University, the candidate's choice with regard to the confidentiality of the letters from outside reviewers. The Department Chair will also inform the candidate of his or her rights in the process, and provide the candidate with a copy of the Departmental and University rules regarding the RPT process.

The Department Chair will also at this time notify the Departmental graduate and undergraduate SACs of their opportunity to participate in the RPT process, indicating the names of candidates likely to have formal reviews, and the timetable of the review process.

8. Requests for Outside Letters

Requests for letters from referees for formal reviews are sent under the Departmental Chair's signature. They should go out as early in the summer as is practical, but in no case later than August 1st. The letter should indicate the nature of the review, i.e., progress and retention review, possible tenure, possible promotion, and to which rank. Copies of the Departmental criteria and procedures, as well as a vita and selected publications [chosen by the candidate], course evaluations, course syllabi or links to web resources, a statement of teaching philosophy, and a statement of research goals and accomplishments should accompany the request.

Reviewers will be requested to evaluate the candidate on the basis of the criteria in this document, to the extent that they have knowledge. Reviewers will be requested to respond by August 15th.

## 9. Contents of the RPT File

The file for a candidate will consist of the following items. [For an informal review items b, c, d, e, and f will not be included.] The candidate has the right to review his or her file prior to the preliminary meeting of the RPT Advisory Committee and provide a written response before the set deadline.

- a. A current CV provided by the candidate, including the following:
  - i. Education and employment histories
  - ii. A full list of publications
  - iii. Past, present and pending grants (including institution, duration, amount and dates)
  - iv. Service to the Department, College, University and the profession
  - v. Students and postdocs supervised
  - vi. Honors and awards
  - vii. A statement of teaching philosophy
  - viii. A statement of goals and accomplishments
- b. The list of external reviewers provided by the subcommittee, with a short CV provided by the reviewer or his or her biography from Am. Men and Women in Science, or a similar publication, as appropriate.
- c. List provided by the subcommittee of who suggested each external reviewer (candidate or committee).
- d. A sample version of the Chair's letter to external reviewers provided by the Department Chair.
- e. The letters from the external reviewers.
- f. Signed waiver form provided by the candidate.
- g. Peer teaching reviews solicited and provided by the subcommittee and the Department administration.
- h. Copies of available student evaluations for the past five years.
- i. Summary reports from past RPT reviews and recommendations.
- j. The Departmental SAC reports provided by the SAC.
- k. Authorization for early tenure review (if relevant) obtained by the candidate.
- l. Any unsolicited letters provided they are signed by the authors.
- m. Any statement from the candidate.

After the Department Advisory Committee has completed its deliberations, the summary report (consisting of the edited subcommittee report, the summary of discussion, and recommendations made by the Departmental Advisory Committee) shall be added to the file.

## 10. Date for RPT Advisory Committee Meeting

Dates for Departmental RPT Advisory Committee meetings will be set in consultation between the Departmental Chair and the Chair of the RPT Advisory Committee. Usually this will be in early October.

#### 11. RPT Advisory Committee Preliminary and Final Meeting

The Departmental RPT Advisory Committee meeting consists of three parts. At a preliminary meeting the subcommittee reports for each candidate will be presented, actions proposed with respect to that candidate outlined, and questions answered. At the second meeting, scheduled for all day, the subcommittee recommendations will be discussed and votes taken. If, however, it is determined that essential data are missing from a candidate's file, deliberations for that candidate will be continued in a subsequent meeting after the file is completed and after the candidate has been allowed one week in which to respond. The third part is discussed in paragraph 12 below. All votes on tenure, promotion, or non-retention, will be by secret ballot. When the review is formal, the clerk of the committee [usually the Departmental Chair's Administrative Assistant] will solicit votes from absent members with respect to the actions proposed. All absentee votes must be received before the main RPT meeting takes place.

The order of deliberations will be such that the most junior positions will be discussed first, and then faculty members can leave as they are no longer permitted to participate in the deliberations of higher ranking faculty according to the Advisory Committee membership criteria in paragraph 3 above. Deviations from this order can be made with the agreement of the committee members in attendance.

#### 12. Approval of Summary of Deliberations

The third part of the proceedings is the consideration and approval of the summary of deliberations for each candidate. Each subcommittee chair will act as Secretary of the Advisory Committee for the case considered by his or her committee. The subcommittee chair, in consultation with the subcommittee, will draft a final report, drawing from the subcommittee report and including a summary of the deliberations in a form that can be transmitted to the candidate. The draft final report will be brought to the Department RPT Advisory Committee for approval and/or modification, at a special meeting convened for that purpose. This final report, signed by the Chair of the RPT Advisory Committee, will be transmitted to the candidate. This final report along with the letters of recommendation and any other documentation, will be added to the candidate's file, to be forwarded to the Department Chair for his or her written evaluation.

#### 13. Department Chair Meeting with Candidate

After the Advisory Committee report is completed, whether the review is formal or informal, the Department Chair will meet with the candidate, provide him/her with a copy of the Advisory Committee report, discuss its implications, and remind the candidate of the right under PPM 9-5.1 Sec F.3. to insert comments in the record if he or she chooses. If the Department Chair was not present at the Advisory Committee meeting, a knowledgeable participating representative of that meeting (RPT Chair) should be present at the Department Chair's meeting with the candidate.

#### 14. Candidate's Right to Respond

Within seven business days, as provided by PPM 9-5.1 Sec F.3, the candidate may add to the file a written response to the final Advisory Committee Report and the Department Chair's evaluation. The completed file will then be transmitted by the Chair to the Dean of the College of Science in accordance with PPM 9-5.1 Secs. B. and F.

## **TIMELINE**

### **FEBRUARY**

The RPT Advisory Committee Chair is selected.

### **MARCH, APRIL:**

1. Policy Board meets and proposes subcommittees for each faculty member who is either non-tenured or not yet full Professor.
2. The Chair notifies each candidate about the RTP process, and of their responsibility to contribute; to select an advocate, to provide lists of reviewers, CV, etc. A deadline for material to be provided to outside reviewers is set with at least three week's notice to the candidate.
3. The Chair notifies the graduate and undergraduate SAC's of their role in the RTP process.

### **APRIL, MAY:**

1. Subcommittees where formal reviews are required or requested meet to create list of outside reviewers.
2. The subcommittees are formally approved.
3. Chair reminds the SAC Committees of their role in the RTP process, so that new officers are notified.

### **APRIL through AUG 1st**

1. Outside letters are solicited by the Department Chair.

### **SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER:**

1. The RPT file closes to all but the candidate three weeks before the Preliminary RPT meeting. The candidate may respond to any material in the file. The file closes to all two weeks before the Preliminary RPT meeting.
2. Subcommittees meet and prepare reports for the full department Advisory Committee. The reports are not part of the initial RPT files. They may be incorporated in edited form in the full Advisory Committee reports.

### **OCTOBER**

1. Preliminary and Final meetings of the Department RTP Advisory Committee.
2. Summaries of the discussions are presented to the full Advisory Committee, and approved, after any modifications.

## **CRITERIA**

The following criteria will be used in evaluating a candidate's research and creative work, teaching, and service in making the case for retention, tenure, and/or promotion. Retention will be recommended only when it is determined that there is a reasonable probability that tenure will ultimately be recommended. Tenure in a rank will be recommended only for candidates fully qualified for promotion to that rank. Tenure will not be recommended for the rank of Assistant Professor.

### **Research and Creative Work**

A faculty member should exhibit independence, creativity, collegiality, a high level of productivity, and an ability to bring research activities to a conclusion, which usually implies publication in a refereed journal. A faculty member's work should be of high esteem in his or her discipline. Where a group effort is necessarily involved, his or her contribution should be clearly identifiable and of high value. A faculty member's professional conduct should be consistent with the Guidelines for Professional Conduct of the American Physical Society (Ethics and Values Statement 02.2) and the University Code of Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (PPM 8-12.4).

It is expected that a candidate for promotion to Associate Professor has demonstrated effectiveness in research and creative work. For example, the candidate has completed work of special significance or excellence, is visible outside of the Department, and has obtained appropriate funding for his or her research. A candidate for promotion to Professor is a widely recognized contributor to his or her chosen field(s) of research.

The candidate's field of research is a matter to be considered at the time of the initial appointment, and is not to be considered at the time of tenure or promotion.

In the event that a person is hired at or promoted to the rank of Associate Professor before achieving tenure, the subsequent conferral of tenure requires that the faculty member has provided convincing evidence that he or she will continue to achieve the standards expected of an Associate Professor and is likely to achieve the standards expected for promotion to the rank of Professor. In the event that a person is hired at or promoted to the rank of Professor before achieving tenure, the subsequent conferral of tenure requires that the faculty member has provided convincing evidence that he or she will continue to achieve the standards expected of a Professor.

We will judge candidates on the following criteria, which are listed in approximately decreasing order of importance:

1. Publications and citations. Measures of external approbation are publications in peer-reviewed journals, invited articles in edited volumes, publications of scientific books, and citations of the candidate's work by others. Some of this work may represent activities prior to joining the U of U faculty. While the number of such publications is a quantitative measure of productivity, quality, impact, and in the case of a group effort the value of the candidate's contribution, as judged by peers and external referees, is valued above quantity. In the case of a group effort, the Department values particularly publications that describe work in which the candidate plays a leading role in the conception, execution, and authoring of the work. During a candidate's initial probationary period, work completed while a faculty member in the Physics Department at the University of Utah is an important measure of the candidate's ability to pursue a successful research career in the Department, and is therefore given greater weight in the deliberations than work accomplished before coming to Utah.

The Physics Department recognizes that it is in the nature of some group research areas that several years are required to develop and operate major research equipment before important scientific publications appear. In weighing tenure or promotion to Associate Professor in these

cases, the Department will consider the strength of the candidate's contribution to the group effort and the prospects for significant group publications.

2. External recognition. Outside letters of recommendation provide the principal basis for assessing external recognition. Since letters from former thesis advisors and current co-PI's are routinely praising, they may be solicited at the discretion of the subcommittee, but they should not be counted in the required minimum number.
3. Ability to obtain funding appropriate to the field and to the candidate's rank. External funding is valued more highly than funding from campus resources. Normally, a prerequisite for promotion to Associate Professor is the securing of appropriate outside funding with good prospects for continuation and a prerequisite for promotion to Professor is an established long term record of securing of adequate outside funding in support of the candidate's research activities. However, in case the candidate receives research support from an existing long-term externally-funded group project, the candidate will be judged instead by the extent to which his or her contributions to the group effort are important for assuring continued funding. Letters from outside reviewers and information from the leader of the group effort will be used to form this judgment.
4. Invited presentations to scientific meetings. In evaluating invitations, the importance of the meeting to the discipline and the prominence of the presentation are considered.
5. Research honors, prizes, and awards.
6. Leadership and collegiality. To the extent appropriate to the candidate's research endeavor and rank, the ability to direct a research group is valued. The organization of and/or active participation in Departmental seminars and collaboration with other Departmental members are evidence of collegiality.
7. Attendance at scientific meetings. Presentations and attendance are measures of scientific activity.
8. Short or longer-term research visits to other institutions. Collaborative research visits are visible evidence of research activity. Invitations to give talks and offers of support for longer term visits are evidence of esteem.
9. Patent disclosures and patents arising from research.

## **Teaching**

Teaching, of both graduate and undergraduate students, is considered to be one of the primary missions of a faculty member in the Department of Physics. The expectations of the Physics Department are that promotion to Associate Professor and granting of tenure require the candidate to demonstrate satisfactory teaching effectiveness and to possess the potential, with more experience, of becoming a superior instructor. For promotion to Professor, a candidate must be an accomplished instructor and be an inspiration to students.

In evaluating the candidates teaching contributions, the following items will be examined:

1. Experience. The candidate is expected to carry a normal teaching load, subject to adjustment according to research, administrative, and other demands on the candidate's time. Only under exceptional circumstances are buy-outs considered for untenured faculty members, and only for limited duration.
2. Competence. A candidate is expected to be qualified by virtue of knowledge, temperament, and

skill to teach any undergraduate course offered by the Physics Department.

Other considerations include:

3. Innovative teaching techniques.
4. Internal and external awards for teaching.
5. Leadership in teaching and curriculum development.
6. Achievements of students advised, both graduate and undergraduate.
7. Effectiveness of supervision of teaching assistants.
8. Authorship of educational materials, such as textbooks and software.

All of this data is collected from the candidate, the Departmental files, and the Advocate, and is evaluated by the candidate's subcommittee. Further essential sources of information include

1. Course Evaluations. A student course evaluation will be administered for each course and its instructor. It addresses various aspects of the course and its instructor, of which the most important are:
  - a. The instructor's teaching effectiveness.
  - b. The instructor's concern for students.
  - c. The instructor's knowledge of the subject matter.
  - d. The instructor's accessibility to students.

These evaluations are kept as part of the faculty member's official file. During an RPT review, these records are used as one of the criteria for determining the level of competence in teaching.

2. Graduate and Undergraduate SAC reports. In the case of a formal review the candidate is examined for teaching effectiveness by the Student Advisory Committees (SAC). The candidate is asked to submit a statement of teaching philosophy to the SACs, which becomes part of the candidate's file. The SACs also make a comprehensive review of the candidate's teaching evaluations and interview students, selected by the SACs, who have been taught by the candidate. If appropriate, the undergraduate SAC should also interview honors students and undergraduate research assistants, and the graduate SAC should also interview MS and PhD students and graduate teaching assistants supervised by the candidate. Based on the above information, a report is submitted to the RPT subcommittee with a recommendation for action.
3. Faculty Evaluations. One or more senior faculty members, chosen by the subcommittee, will visit the classes of a candidate for tenure or promotion, and prepare a report to the candidate's subcommittee. If the Department has conducted other such visits, as a part of normal Departmental monitoring of teaching performance, the reports of these visits can also be made part of the teaching record. These teaching reports will have significant weight in the RPT process.
3. Course material provided by the candidate and/or citations to course material available on the internet.

## **Service**

Service to the Physics Department, the University of Utah, professional societies, and the public is the

third major factor to be considered for promotion or the granting of tenure. Although not as important as scholarly research and teaching, diligent service is essential to the awarding of promotion or tenure.

Service to the Physics Department, the College of Science, and the University of Utah is given the highest weight followed in order by service to professional organizations in physics or related disciplines, editing books and journals, organizing scientific meetings, administrative services, and public service to the local community, the state and the nation.

For promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, a candidate is expected to contribute as an individual scientist or faculty member in significant service activities. For promotion to the rank of Professor, a candidate is expected, in addition, to play a leadership role in some service activities. Examples of leadership include, but are not limited to, serving as the chair on committees, serving on national review panels, and serving as an officer of professional organizations.

Specific criteria in order of importance are:

1. Membership on and leadership of Departmental, college or university committees. A faculty member is expected to serve on Departmental committees. It is recognized that some committees are more demanding and time consuming than others. A faculty member is also a member of the university community at large and as such shares the responsibility for its welfare and governance.
2. Research administration. Serving as an administrator of a group research effort, such as a principal investigator of a group or interdisciplinary research project or a director of a facility, institute or center.
3. Refereeing scientific articles, books, research proposals and serving on review panels or committees. A faculty member is expected to participate in the refereeing and reviewing processes that are standard for members of the physics profession.
4. Leadership in professional organizations and societies related to the physics profession.
5. Editing books and journals that cover topics related to the physics profession.
6. Organizing scientific meetings such as national and international conferences, workshops or summer schools.
7. Recruiting students. A faculty member is encouraged to participate in activities that promote the advantages of the Department, the College, and the University to potential students.
8. Presenting science to popular audiences. A faculty member is encouraged to popularize his or her work, and perhaps the work of others, at a level that can be appreciated by students and the general public.
9. Public service. The physics profession does not exist in a vacuum. A faculty member has many skills that can be effectively applied to the public good. Examples include, but are not restricted to, participation in local schools, promoting diversity and the roles of minorities in science and society, and providing expert advice to governmental agencies.