HDFS Procedure for Peer Review as Part of the Annual Review Process

Approved by the Faculty
2/27/15

I. Introduction

The university requires that all faculty participate in an annual review process and that faculty below the rank of Full Professor receive peer feedback. This document outlines the principles that the HDFS department developed to guide the peer review process, and also describes the procedures for carrying out two types of annual reviews: Standard and Expanded.

Types of Peer Review

The faculty Annual Review process conducted each year is intended for several purposes: to provide formative feedback to support the faculty member’s on-going professional growth and development; to facilitate and recognize excellence among the faculty; and to provide feedback on the faculty member’s progress toward promotion and/or tenure. As part of the process, peers who are senior to the person being reviewed must assign an “overall rating” of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory based on the person’s annual performance, and provide input in reviewing the faculty member’s progress toward promotion and/or tenure.

Given that the type of feedback that is of most use to the faculty member may differ depending on the person’s stage in his/her professional development, two options for the peer review process will be available. Each faculty member will request his/her peer review be based on one of the following:

1) **Standard Peer Review:** A review based on one year’s documentation. Feedback focuses on formative feedback designed to assist the faculty member in strengthening his/her work and his/her progress toward promotion and/or tenure if applicable.

2) **Expanded Peer Review:** A review based on documentation from the previous three years and designed to provide summative feedback and recommendations regarding progress toward promotion and/or tenure. This expanded review is more in-depth, encompasses a broader sample of the person’s work, and is intended to provide feedback to persons who are considering going up for promotion and/or tenure relatively soon. The review process should roughly be equivalent to a third-year review process conducted for Assistant Professors (and for Assistant Professors in their third year, this process would be the third-year review).

When submitting materials for peer review, the faculty member would complete a short form (see Attachment 1) to designate which profile she/he has elected, the type of review being requested, and the types of materials submitted (see below for a description of required and optional materials).
Criteria for Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Rating

Within our Department, we believe that feedback on progress toward promotion and/or tenure is more useful when it addresses the faculty’s evaluation of the person’s work in terms of strengths and areas for growth. Therefore the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory rating should be based primarily on the evaluation of a person’s annual performance, and feedback on progress toward promotion and/or tenure be provided in a narrative form. For the current year, a rating of Unsatisfactory should be assigned in the rare instances in which there is a clear failure to perform key job duties adequately. In considering the possibility of assigning an Unsatisfactory rating, care should be taken to consider each individual's specific job duties (e.g., teaching and advising assignments specific to the person; percent time devoted to research for the person, etc.). Examples when an Unsatisfactory rating might be appropriate include extremely poor teaching evaluations; failure to advise assigned students; not meeting service responsibilities; and/or lack of engagement in scholarly work/no contributions to the scholarly mission of the department. Any Unsatisfactory rating must be clearly justified in relation to these criteria.

II. Principles for Peer Review Process

The following principles are provided to articulate the Department’s vision for the peer review process. The principles fall into two categories: general principles and principles to guide the process for expanded or more in-depth peer review of progress toward promotion and tenure.

General Principles

- The University has established two purposes for the Annual Review: evaluation of annual performance and evaluation of progress toward Promotion and Tenure. Our purpose for the peer review process is to provide the Chair with input/feedback on the person’s progress toward promotion and/or tenure in a manner that best fits the faculty member’s goals and career trajectory.
- Faculty members should have choice in the type/focus (“standard” with formative feedback vs. “expanded” with summative feedback) of the review process through which peer feedback is solicited.
- The process should be set up in a manner that provides feedback that is useful to the faculty member and to the Chair in carrying out the Chair’s role of providing feedback on progress toward promotion and/or tenure that is informed by input from departmental faculty members.
- The process should serve to promote broader awareness of the work that colleagues within the department have accomplished, to provide opportunities for junior faculty to learn how peer reviews are conducted, and to provide optimal transparency in the review process.
- The time and effort burden of the process should be consistent with the faculty member’s desire for feedback on progress toward promotion and/or tenure (i.e., we should invest more time and effort into the review process for faculty who have requested the expanded review and have a less time-intensive process for faculty who have requested the standard review).
Choices about the type of peer review that is solicited in any given year should not have implications for subsequent faculty member decisions regarding the type of annual reviews to request and/or timing of a request for a P & T review.

**Principles for the Expanded Review**

- The Expanded Review process should be optional for faculty who desire more in-depth feedback on progress toward promotion and/or tenure, and should be akin to the third-year review process in terms of the type of feedback offered.
- The Expanded Review process should be bi-directional and serve the purposes of both educating the greater faculty about a person’s work as well as informing the individual faculty member regarding how peers perceive his/her work.
- To ensure equity across faculty members whose scholarship varies in focus, design, and analysis (encompassing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches) the process may not be one that is biased in favor of one or other type of scholarship.
- The process must be one in which those being evaluated have the opportunity to provide faculty evaluators with full information about their work, particularly in cases in which there is a mismatch between the scholarship of those being evaluated and those conducting the evaluation.
- The faculty member whose work is being reviewed should have opportunities to provide a thorough picture of his/her work to peer reviewers so that they understand the nature of his/her work and how his/her work fits the selected profile and P & T criteria articulated by the University, school and department. The objective of providing a thorough picture of his/her work could be accomplished through a variety of means. For instance, the faculty member could provide contextual information to the peer reviewers through the materials submitted (i.e., the optional overview statement to provide an explanation of the corpus of his/her own work, optional documents that could be submitted for review, etc.). The person could also have the opportunity to inform peer reviewers by requesting input from a colleague who is more familiar with the person’s work and/or the field, and, in consultation with the Department Chair, requesting a member of the peer review committee serve as a lead reviewer who is thoroughly familiar with the person’s work, provides additional contextual information to the peer review group, and leads the peer review process.

To facilitate maximum opportunity for Department colleagues to learn about each other’s work, the Chair will post copies of each faculty member’s Annual Report and updated Curriculum Vita on the HDFS Faculty Blackboard site, which is available to all members of the faculty.

**III. Standard Review Procedures**

**Description**

**Standard Review:** A review based on one year’s documentation that is designed to provide peer feedback on the faculty member’s contributions to the mission of the Department and/or progress toward promotion and tenure, if relevant. One goal of this process is to facilitate among all faculty a broader awareness and recognition of colleagues’ work. All faculty (at all ranks) will be
reviewed annually using this process, with the exception of Assistants who are up for third year review and Associates who elect for an expanded review.

**Reviewers and Role Assignments**

For the Standard Review Process, faculty at all ranks are eligible to participate as reviewers. The Department Chair will appoint at least two review committees of three faculty members each. At least one Full Professor would be included on each committee in order to ensure that feedback is provided from someone senior to junior faculty being reviewed. In general, committee membership would rotate on an annual basis; however, ideally, the rotation would allow for one person who served the previous year to remain on the committee for continuity, and the remaining members of the committee to consist of persons who did not serve the previous year.

**Preparation for the Review Process**

The Standard Review will involve the materials typically submitted annually to the Chair, including a completed Annual Review form and an updated Vita. These materials will be made available to peer review committees electronically by posting them on BlackBoard.

**Process for Peer Review**

Prior to meeting as a group, each committee member will review the annual review materials and complete a brief form for each person being reviewed by the committee. In completing this form, the reviewer will assign a rating of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory for annual performance based on the descriptions included in this document (see page 1) and write a brief summary of strengths and suggestions to provide formative feedback about the faculty’s contributions toward the Department’s mission and/or progress toward promotion and tenure, if relevant.

Each peer review committee will then convene a meeting to briefly discuss each faculty member being reviewed. Committees must arrive at a consensus regarding the Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory rating. Consensus is not required for the brief summary of strengths and suggestions, which should reflect the range of input from the peer reviewers and could consist of a list encompassing the strengths and/or suggestions noted by all members.

The principle underlying the formative feedback is that it will be meaningful, but brief (i.e., a summary of strengths and suggestions). Peer review committees may decide the best process for writing the summary feedback to be shared with the Department Chair and the faculty member. For example, they may decide to write the feedback as a group or divide up this task.

The Chair will be responsible for completing each faculty member’s Annual Review Form (including both the Department Head and the Peer Summary Evaluation), and for obtaining the required signatures from persons who participated in the peer review process. The Chair will meet with the faculty member to discuss the faculty member’s annual performance and progress toward promotion and tenure (if applicable), and will share the written feedback from the peer review process (the signed Annual Review form and a summary of faculty feedback).
IV. Expanded Review Procedures

Description of Expanded Review

Expanded Peer Review: A review based on documentation from the previous three years and designed to provide feedback and recommendations regarding progress toward promotion and/or tenure. This expanded review is more in-depth than the standard review, encompasses a broader sample of the person’s work, and is intended to provide feedback to persons who are considering going up for promotion and/or tenure relatively soon. The review process should roughly be equivalent to a third-year review process conducted for Assistant Professors (and for Assistant Professors in their third year, this process would be the third-year review).

Reviewers and Role Assignments

All full professors will participate in the Expanded Review of faculty members who request an expanded review. Each candidate who elects for an Expanded Review will select a lead reviewer from one of the full professors, in consultation with the Department Chair. The lead reviewer’s roles include: 1) meet with the candidate and the Department Chair to discuss the review process and provide suggestions on materials to be submitted; 2) meet with the candidate to review the materials submitted to ensure a full understanding of the person’s work; 3) assist in convening the expanded review meeting and lead the discussion about that candidate; 4) serve as the lead writer for the narrative summary of feedback for the candidate, coordinating with other faculty reviewers and seeking approval for the final version; and 5) meet with the candidate and the Chair to review the feedback from peers provided in the Expanded Review process. In addition to these specific responsibilities, lead reviewers are expected to familiarize themselves more intimately with the candidate’s methods and areas of expertise and appropriate metrics to facilitate the evaluation of the candidate’s emerging national and international reputation.

Preparation for the Review Process

Any faculty member who intends to submit materials for an Expanded Review should notify the Department Chair of his/her intentions at the beginning of the spring semester. At that time the Department Chair and the candidate, through consultation, will identify a preferred lead reviewer, and the Department Chair will invite that person to serve as the lead reviewer. Should the preferred lead reviewer decline to serve in the role, the Department Chair and candidate will together identify an alternate person, and the Department Chair will issue an invitation to serve as a lead reviewer.

Faculty members who elect for the Expanded Review should submit the materials that best represent their work and provide faculty reviewers with a deep understanding of the nature and impact of the work. The specific materials to be submitted should be discussed with the Department Chair and the lead reviewer, and should be submitted no later than the end of spring break.
The candidate is required to submit a completed Annual Review form for the current year and the two previous years, a completed Delaware form, an updated Research Statement, and an updated Vita. She/he may also provide additional materials in order to facilitate the faculty’s understanding of her/his work. The expectation is that the candidate, in consultation with the lead reviewer and the Chair, will decide what materials to submit for the review process. The following are examples of optional materials that could be submitted for the Expanded Review process:

**Overview Statement:** The faculty member can include a narrative statement that provides the reviewers with a context for understanding and evaluating the person’s work. This Overview Statement could explain the person’s goals and how they were or were not achieved, the person’s work and how the activities and products from the previous years contributed to the line of work, and information about any special circumstances that would be helpful to reviewers in conducting the peer review.

**Additional Review Materials:** Persons participating in the Expanded Peer Review process are encouraged to submit additional materials to facilitate their colleagues’ understanding of their work. The person may submit materials such as copies of manuscripts; copies of grant proposals; reports from peer teaching observations, etc.

**Input from Colleagues:** In order to assist faculty reviewers in the effort to understand the candidate’s work, the candidate can elect to request feedback be solicited from a colleague who is already familiar with her/his work. The purpose of the feedback is to provide the colleague’s perspective on the national or international reputation of the candidate’s work, not to evaluate the person’s readiness for promotion. The Department Chair and lead reviewer will work with the candidate to identify appropriate colleagues, from within or outside of the Department, to serve in this role. Persons invited to serve in this role can be persons who do or do not meet the criteria for “arms length” given that the purpose is to provide contextual information to support the review process rather than evaluate the person’s work. The Department Chair (with assistance from the Department Secretary as appropriate) will invite the selected colleague to provide input. An updated Curriculum Vita will be shared with the colleague. The intent is that the colleague be someone who is already familiar with the candidate’s work, so evaluation of additional materials would not be necessary. The colleague will complete a form (see Attachment 2) provided by the Department Chair to provide input on the candidate’s work, and return the completed form to the Chair. Persons who provide input for the Expanded Review process may serve as a reviewer as part of a subsequent P & T evaluation.

The Chair will make each person’s materials available to faculty participating in the review process electronically by posting on a confidential BlackBoard site.

**Process for Peer Review**

Faculty reviewers, having reviewed all submitted materials, will meet to discuss the person’s progress toward promotion and/or tenure. If a faculty reviewer cannot attend the meeting, she or
he may participate via conference call or electronic format. In cases where she or he cannot participate, she or he may submit comments to the lead reviewer prior to the meeting and will have the opportunity to comment on the written feedback to the candidate. The lead reviewer will chair the meeting, and the Department Chair will attend in order to hear faculty discussion.

The goals of the review process are twofold: to inform faculty reviewers regarding the candidate’s work and to provide feedback that will assist the candidate in putting together the strongest file for possible for P & T review. As such, the review committee should discuss recommendations for the candidate’s work and how the candidate can best present his/her work in the P & T process, as well as any special considerations regarding a future P & T review process (such as the need to include persons with particular content or methodological expertise in the review process).

Following discussion of the faculty member’s materials, two forms of feedback will be provided. First, the peer review committee will assign a rating for the Peer’s Summary Evaluation (i.e., majority vote on Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory for annual performance as described on page 1). The Full Professors will also prepare an integrative statement of progress toward promotion and/or tenure in research, teaching, and service (as is prepared for an Assistant Professor’s third year review) and any recommendations that will be helpful for a future P & T review process. The lead reviewer will be responsible for writing the narrative feedback, with input and assistance from all faculty reviewers. The feedback should reflect the areas of strengths and weaknesses noted by faculty reviewers, and should also convey the extent to which there was agreement among faculty reviewers on the person’s strengths, weaknesses and progress toward promotion and tenure. The feedback may also offer suggestions for next steps the candidate might take to continue making progress toward promotion. Full Professors will provide the integrative statement to the Chair.

**Annual Review Form and Feedback**

The Chair will be responsible for completing each faculty member’s Annual Review Form (including both the Department Head and the Peer Summary Evaluation of S/U), and for obtaining the required signatures from persons who participated in the peer review process. The narrative feedback from faculty reviewers will be attached to the Annual Review Form.

The Chair and lead reviewer will meet with the faculty member to discuss the faculty member’s progress toward promotion and tenure, and will share the written feedback from the peer review process (the signed Annual Review Form plus an integrated statement from the faculty peer reviewers).