Second-Year Review Instructions

Deadline. All materials, including the counseling letter draft, need to be received in the Dean’s Office by February 1 of the academic year in which the review is conducted.

Purpose. The second-year review is primarily for formative feedback and is expected to lead to the faculty member’s second (and two-year) pre-tenure appointment. The review is focused on the following questions:

- Has a research program with apparent promise been started?
- Is this person’s teaching progressing satisfactorily?
- What should this person do to maximize the development of his or her research program?
- What should this person do to improve his or her teaching?

Basic Requirements. This review requires the following:

- Committee review report
- Discussion and double-blind vote by department’s tenured faculty
- Summary of discussion by department’s tenured faculty
- Chair’s memorandum, including the results of the vote, chair’s independent analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the case, and a recommendation regarding reappointment (a two-year term is normal).
- Draft of the chair’s counseling letter
- Supporting documentation:
  1. Faculty member’s statement
  2. Faculty member’s CV
  3. Copies of publications and manuscripts completed at Vanderbilt
  4. Summary of teaching evaluations, including students’ comments
  5. Reports from two faculty members who have observed the reviewee’s teaching on at least two occasions
  6. Other evaluation(s) of teaching (optional)
  7. Letters from internal referees (optional)
Confidentiality. Vanderbilt University regulations stipulate that all materials in a second-year review file, including the review report, can be seen only by the tenured faculty of the department, the Dean, and the Dean’s advisory committee. In particular, the review report may not be shared with the faculty member whose work has been reviewed (the counseling letter provides such feedback). Staff members who provide clerical support must maintain strict confidentiality.

Review committee. While non-tenured faculty and students may not serve on the committee, their input may, of course, be sought.

Copies of publications and manuscripts. These should include items submitted for publication. Include only material published or produced since the reviewee joined the Vanderbilt faculty.

Teaching evaluations. For each course taught at Vanderbilt, means and standard deviations of all course evaluation questionnaire items must be reported along with students’ written comments (typewritten). Please use the Excel template available from the Dean’s Office (Suzan McIntire). The review report should focus on items 4, 7, and 9. Please clarify any anomalous results and supplement questionnaire data with appropriate additional information, including evaluations of the reviewee’s syllabi.

Teaching observations. Two different faculty members (who need not be faculty review committee members and may visit classes together) must observe the reviewee’s teaching on at least two occasions (i.e., a total of at least four observations). Additional observations should be made if performance appears inconsistent or weak. Each observer’s report should be in the form of a memorandum or letter to the review committee.

Internal referees. Optional internal referees might, for example, include persons who have carefully reviewed a manuscript produced by the reviewee, who have collaborated with the reviewee, or who have experienced the reviewee as a mentor or teacher. Letters from external referees are not sought for this review because external reviewers are “saved” for the tenure review.

Review report. The review report should contain the following information:

- Reviewee’s terminal degree, year earned, institution, and area(s) of study
- Postdoctoral study/employment history prior to joining the Vanderbilt faculty
- Year and semester of appointment to Vanderbilt faculty
- Details of any leaves (e.g., due to illness) since appointment at Vanderbilt
- Summary of reviewee’s scholarly foci
• Progress toward establishment of research program

• Recommendation of steps reviewee should take to maximize development of his or her research program

• Progress toward achievement of effectiveness in teaching

• Recommendation of steps reviewee should take to improve his or her teaching

• Reviewee’s service so far and recommendations regarding future amount and types of service

• Recommendation regarding reappointment

Summary of discussion by department’s tenured faculty. This should include the issues that were raised, the strengths and weaknesses of the case that were noted, and suggestions regarding advice that should be given to the reviewee. Attribution of remarks to individual members of the tenured faculty should not be made. A double-blind vote is required.

Counseling letter. The purpose of the chair’s counseling letter is to provide realistic and detailed guidance, in an encouraging and supportive framework, to the reviewee regarding his or her progress and actions that may need to be taken to help achieve a trajectory likely to result in a positive tenure review. Recommendations from the review report and the deliberations of the tenured faculty should be incorporated in a form that can help the reviewee redirect effort (if appropriate), better understand productivity expectations, understand specific steps to be taken to obtain help that may be needed to launch research or improve his or her teaching, and adjust involvement in service activities (if necessary). A sample counseling letter is available from the Dean’s Office.

Time line for review. The second-year review includes the following steps:

September – Members of the committee meet with Associate Dean.

Fall Semester –

Faculty member (reviewee) supplies…

• Reprints of publications and/or manuscripts submitted for publication as Vanderbilt faculty member

• Personal statement (no more than 10 double-spaced pages)

• Course syllabi

• Current CV
Reviewee’s teaching is observed by two faculty members on at least two different occasions per observer.

Student evaluations of teaching (excluding current semester) are assembled.

January –

Review committee drafts report, taking fall teaching ratings and any additional materials (recent reprints, comments on fall teaching ratings, etc.) from reviewee into account.

Tenured departmental faculty members meet, discuss review report and other materials in review file, and vote on reviewee’s retention.

By February 1 –

Department chair sends review file, including chair’s recommendation, review report, and draft of counseling letter to Dean.

March –

Dean sends recommendation to Provost.

Late in Spring Semester –

When Provost’s approval of retention has been received, Dean works with department chair to finalize counseling letter.

Counseling letter shared with faculty member, who meets with department chair and signs acknowledgment of receipt and discussion of letter; copy of cosigned letter sent to Dean.

Official reappointment letter sent to faculty member from Dean.