

# RENEWAL AND PROMOTION GUIDE FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSOR TRACK

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## OVERVIEW

This guide complements the English AS Handbook by focusing on renewal and promotion for those in the Teaching Professor track; it describes procedures and gives guidance specific to English, all within the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences' (DSAS) renewal and promotion [criteria and processes](#).

For general context, Pitt has two “streams”: Appointment Stream (AS) and Tenure Stream (TS). The appointment stream includes all faculty who are not in the tenure stream, such as Teaching Professors (of all ranks), Instructors, VLs, VIs, VAPs, PTIs, CAPs, RAPs, and other titles.

Within the AS, Teaching Professors are the largest in number, and the Dietrich School houses the vast majority of them. Furthermore, English is home to a significant number of the school's Teaching Professors, so how we renew and promote our faculty has implications for the school and the University at large.

Teaching Assistant Professors and Teaching Associate Professors typically have 3-year renewable contracts; Teaching Professors have 5-year renewable contracts.\* A typical timeline—though there are plenty of exceptions—is for a newly hired Teaching Assistant Professor to fulfill two 3-year contracts, then be promoted to Teaching Associate Professor; then to file for promotion to Teaching Professor in the fall of year 6 as a TAssocP.

One of the aims of this guide, and of our mentorship and administration in this department, is to help each individual in the Teaching Professor track navigate that path with clarity and transparency, in ways that are best for their career. There's no single, set career trajectory through the Teaching Professor track, but there are many successful options.

\*Please consult the current CBA for specifics on these ranges, and for initial contract lengths when relevant. Full-time years in equivalent positions at Pitt can be counted with the approval of the dean; please discuss with the chair.

## MENTORS

Our department believes deeply in a culture of mentorship. Every Teaching Assistant and Associate Professor has a mentor from the AS Mentoring Committee. This colleague will guide you through various aspects of your career. The committee is composed of approximately 12 colleagues (both AS and TS), elected for 3-year terms, who work to ensure that everyone in the Teaching Professor track has adequate support

and sees their career path clearly. The department chair and assistant chair co-direct the ASMC. Your AS mentor will work with you to assemble your dossier for renewals and promotions, which means that your mentor will not be on your review committee, in order to avoid a conflict between the mentor and primary evaluator roles.

## RESOURCES

There are also resources to help you along the way. If you would like to attend a conference, workshop, or other opportunity that is directly related to developing your teaching, to offering students compelling experiences in your course, or to training for new classroom skills, then reach out to the chair's office. We'll direct you to a form that the office for the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies provides through which you can request curriculum development funds.

Please consult the AS Handbook for more information about resources and visit the [Faculty Resources](#) page for further contacts and information; the dean's form is there as well.

## FMFL, LEAVES, AND BUYOUTS

Next, it's also important to ensure that you know about the many other resources available to you for any number of other reasons. Full-Time Appointment Stream faculty can request [Faculty Medical and Family Leave](#) (FMFL) if they serve as primary caregiver for an elderly parent in crisis, or for the birth or adoption of a child, for personal medical reasons, and so forth. Please know that the chair's office and office staff will support you in making an FMFL request, and that they will not ask for any personal or medical information along the way. (For medical leaves, you submit a Physician Certification form that goes directly to MetLife; no one else ever sees it [see the information in the FMFL link above].) Typically, the leave is granted as a reduction in teaching responsibilities, based on your physician's recommendation. While on FMFL leave, you continue to receive your full salary and benefits. Contact the chair's office for further details.

In some cases, AS faculty can also apply for Professional Enhancement leaves if they win prestigious national awards, such as NEA fellowships or grants. These awards replace your salary, or a portion of it, thus allowing you to buy out some or all of your teaching. There are also smaller outside grants or even internal awards that can subsidize or offset the cost of relieving you from teaching, depending on the situation. It's a complex formula that varies case by case, so just talk with the chair's office if you

are considering one of these opportunities. The same is true for the annual, competitively-awarded AS sabbaticals, which will be announced roundly.

The important thing to note regarding any type of leave is that your contract years can still accrue (or advance) while you take the leave, or you can ask to pause the years. You may go up for renewal or promotion while on leave; the decision is yours, and you will not be penalized or judged adversely in any way for it. Again, discuss this thoroughly with your chair.

One other option is to buy out one or more of your courses. The current rate for buyouts is available through our payroll coordinator; it is typically  $\frac{1}{6}$  of your annual two-term salary per course, on an escalating scale. Given the hefty cost, it's a serious option, and one that you should discuss extensively with mentors and the chair when considering. Once again, your contract years continue to advance even if you buy out a course; however, if you buy out a certain number of courses relative to your overall teaching load, it technically reduces you to being part-time faculty, which carries serious consequences. Again, talk with your chair and office staff about this formula and its complexities.

Please consult the [Faculty Handbook](#) for more on all of these topics.

## YEAR-END REVIEW (YER) DOSSIER

At the end of each academic year, all faculty on the Teaching Professor track (at all levels) are required to create an online dossier to represent their teaching, service, and professional development for that year. This dossier will be available to the chair, asst chair, and program administrators only. You will receive a memo from the chair outlining exactly what belongs in your YER and how to use that annual dossier as a repository of work for your renewal and promotion dossier. The YER dossier will generally include the following items, but please consult the annual memo from the chair, along with the YER template you receive for uploading your materials, for specific information:

- Current CV (with date)
- A cover letter for the annual review providing a self-evaluation and future goals.
- Syllabi for recent representative courses with supporting materials.
- All OMET evaluations (and, where appropriate, Writing Center evaluations).
- Service summary and evidence of contributions beyond assigned courses, such as program administration, key departmental committee work, independent studies, undergraduate research projects or theses, new course proposals; also, as appropriate, contributions beyond teaching may include service on DSAS or

other University committees or initiatives, publications, and conference presentations, etc.

- Other relevant information such as publications, awards, honors, student achievements, unsolicited statements from students or colleagues.

## ANNUAL REVIEW

The annual reviews (in response to the YERs) are the responsibility of the chair, the assistant chair, and the DUGS of the colleague's program(s). (For more information on the annual review process, see the chair's office's memos in the [Administrative Transparency Documents folder](#)). Any potential concerns or problems on the horizon should be indicated in review. The chair and assistant chair will discuss with the AS Mentoring Committee any needs for additional support for the given colleague.

## A NOTE ON OMET EVALUATIONS

OMET evaluations are only one part of a general review. The OMET evaluations provide a limited view of a faculty member's teaching. Scores that are very high or very low should command attention; the students' written comments are often helpful in these cases, either to indicate strengths or weaknesses. But these OMET evaluations will always be considered in relation to the more substantial representations in course materials, peer evaluations, student materials, and self-report. Please see our departmental [Statement on the Evaluation of Teaching](#) for context.

Special note regarding COVID-19 pandemic: [Spring and summer 2020 OMET evaluations](#), at the discretion of faculty members, need never be included in their YERs, renewal, or promotion files. Although all subsequent evaluations must be included, the provost has also allowed for faculty members to include a [statement contextualizing evaluations](#) received in the course of the pandemic.

## RENEWAL/PROMOTION PROCESS and DOSSIERS

Get to know these [criteria and checklists](#) very well. An important distinction is that renewal at all stages hinges overwhelmingly on excellent teaching, and promotion to Teaching Associate Professor is overwhelmingly based on excellent teaching, too. It's only at the stage of consideration for promotion to Teaching Professor that the criteria and dossier expectations shift substantively (see below). The conversations you have with mentors and colleagues about these criteria and the ways to fulfill them will be vital to your career.

## PROCEDURES

**Orientation:** In the fall of the first term, the chair and/or assistant chair will schedule a meeting for all faculty new to the department in the Teaching Professor track in order to review contract terms and the procedures for evaluation. The AS Mentoring Committee will reach out to the new faculty at this time, too.

**Voting:** For renewals and promotions, everyone votes on cases in the AS below their rank (so Teaching Associate Professors vote on Teaching Assistant Professors), although Teaching Professors are able to vote on Teaching Professor renewals as well. Tenured and Tenure-Stream faculty of equivalent rank and higher (Associate to Associate, for ex.) vote on all AS renewals and promotions, per DSAS bylaws. In the English department, AS faculty vote on TS hires, but not on tenure or promotion in the TS. (Read more in our [departmental bylaws](#))

**Contract renewal timeline and process:** Please consult the [CBA](#) for information on first renewals and presumptive renewal. If you are unsure of your status, please talk to the chair and office manager.

**Contract Renewal and Promotion Dossiers, Teaching Associate Professor and Teaching Professor.** According to the bylaws of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, the criteria for promotion to Teaching Associate Professor or Teaching Professor are [here](#). The promotion review will follow the same process as the review for contract renewal. It will require a dossier containing the same materials as the dossier for renewal (see above), with one exception: the materials should represent the candidate's work since their hire (for cases of promotion to Teaching Associate Professor) or last promotion (for cases of promotion to Teaching Professor).

The case for renewal and/or promotion will be represented by the renewal dossier, which includes materials from the candidate's portfolio, as described above, with the following modifications or additions. The dossier should cover the last three years for Teaching Assistant and Associate Professors, or the last five years for Teaching Professors.

There are slight differences in the checklists of documents required for renewal and promotion (See below). The chair's office and your mentors will work with you on the details of these dossiers. Please note that sample renewal and promotion statements for different ranks can be found in the [Mentoring Documents](#) folder on the Department's SharePoint.

## DOSSIER COMPONENTS

Teaching Professor track faculty of every rank put together a renewal dossier. Those who are seeking promotion to Teaching Associate Professor or Teaching Professor must add some additional items to the basic renewal dossier.

## RENEWAL DOSSIER FOR TEACHING PROFESSOR TRACK FACULTY OF ALL RANKS

**The English Department will assemble these components of the renewal dossier:**

- Cover Letter from the Departmental Chair to Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs, which includes: the promotion process; internal committee recommendation and vote; faculty recommendation and vote; and chair recommendation.
- Employee Record Form
- Departmental Committee Report (if reviewed prior to discussion by full faculty). [Note: in English, this is usually either the program recommendation or the review committee letter]
- Copies of annual letters of evaluation by Department Chair since most recent reappointment and most recent letter of reappointment

**The candidate will assemble these components of the renewal dossier:**

- Dated CV
- Personal Statement: Personal Statement of approximately two to three pages that focuses on the faculty member's teaching philosophy and places the faculty member's other activities and roles in the context of their teaching and mentoring roles. Required for all renewals and promotions.
- Syllabi for four representative courses taught during the last three years; additional materials may be included, not to exceed a total of five pages in length for each course.
- All OMET evaluations (and, where appropriate, Writing Center evaluations) for the contract period. (Note: Spring and Summer 2020 OMETs need not be included in renewal dossiers.)
- Peer evaluations of teaching. Teaching Professor track faculty should have a fall semester peer review in their first year and an additional review in their second year. Those who have been renewed may include an additional peer review for each subsequent renewal period.
- Response to OMETs and/or peer evaluations: a brief narrative (1–1.5 pages) in which you respond to the peer evaluations and/or OMETs in your dossier or in which you describe how you have generally used feedback. For example, have

you used student feedback as you have revised courses, designed new courses, thought about your classroom or commenting practices as a teacher, constructed your grading practices, or considered your teaching philosophy? Have peer evaluations allowed you to see your teaching differently, change your practices for the better, or articulate your reasons for teaching the way you do more clearly?

These two items are optional for Teaching Assistant Professors who are being renewed and required for Teaching Associate Professors and Teaching Professors:

- Documentation of efforts to maintain or advance teaching excellence through revision or development of new course materials, new pedagogical approaches, new teaching or course management technology, or similar.
- Documentation of the impact of the faculty member's teaching or professional activities that extends beyond the classroom to contribute to the program's and department's teaching mission.

## ADDITIONAL DOSSIER MATERIALS FOR PROMOTION TO TEACHING ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

If you are seeking promotion to Teaching Associate Professor, your dossier should include the materials listed under Renewal Dossier (above), plus these items:

- Syllabi for two additional representative courses (for a total of six) taught during the last five years; additional materials may be included, not to exceed a total of five pages in length for each course.
- OMETs for the entire period of the candidate's teaching at their current rank. (Note: Spring and Summer 2020 OMETs need not be included in promotion dossiers.)
- Peer evaluations of teaching (min. 1 per year) from the period under consideration for promotion. The reviews should include peer review of syllabi and course material and, if appropriate, a classroom visit. In cases of early promotion, the two letters for promotion may also count as the two letters for a faculty member in their first contract.

## ADDITIONAL DOSSIER MATERIALS FOR PROMOTION TO TEACHING PROFESSOR

If you are seeking promotion to Teaching Professor, your dossier should include all of the materials listed under Renewal Dossier (above), plus these items:



- Syllabi for two additional representative courses (for a total of six) taught during the last five years; additional materials may be included, not to exceed a total of five pages in length for each course.
- OMETs for the entire period of the candidate's teaching at their current rank. (Note: Spring and Summer 2020 OMETs need not be included in promotion dossiers.)
- Peer evaluations of teaching (min. 1 per year) that include peer review of syllabi and course material and, if appropriate, a classroom visit along with the candidate's responses when appropriate.
- Evidence of important contributions to the undergraduate mission of the University through activities that go beyond the department (demonstrated in such areas as new course development, curricular development, extracurricular activities, or other areas).
- Evidence of contributions to the undergraduate mission of the University that go beyond the department (demonstrated in the significance of their participation in Dietrich School-wide or University-wide initiatives and/or the candidate's contributions to national pedagogy in their discipline).
- Names of those who can provide letters of reference. You will need six letters from referees largely outside the English Department that attest to your contributions. The department will solicit the letters for you; you need to include in your dossier a referee list with a brief description of each person and why they were selected.

Speak with your mentor, the chair's office, and other colleagues about examples that fulfill the criteria for promotion to Teaching Professor and how your work beyond the classroom at each stage of your career can build toward that. Gather evidence across your career of contributions of work such as program administration, key departmental committee work, independent studies, undergraduate research projects or theses, new course and certificate proposals; also, as available, service on DSAS or university committees or initiatives, educational publications or software, publications and conference presentations, and documentation of pedagogical teaching or mentoring provided to faculty colleagues.

## APPEALS

All Teaching Professor track faculty (at all levels) have the right to appeal a decision of non-renewal as outlined in the CBA.

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