

# Preparing your portfolio for tenure and/or promotion

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## Introduction

ASU's university policies for promotion and tenure are provided in ACD 506-04 and 506-05:

<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd506-04.html>

<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd506-05.html>

You should read those policies to get an idea of the general expectations of the institution: "excellence and the promise of continued excellence". You also should become familiar with the process used for promotion and tenure reviews, which is outlined in the process guide located at

<https://provost.asu.edu/academic-personnel/personnel-processes>

## A Strategy for Preparing Your Materials

With those documents as background, I suggest that a helpful strategy is to view your portfolio as the evidence you assemble to answer one these specific personnel action questions:

- **For tenure:** *"Within the context of your department and college, have you demonstrated 'excellence and the promise of continued excellence' during your probationary period at ASU?"*
- **For promotion to professor:** *"Since your promotion to associate professor, and within the context of your department and college, has your continuous excellent performance developed a significant national or international scholarly reputation in your field?"*

So, every item put into your portfolio should address the specific personnel action question that applies to your situation. Since both questions include the words "within the context of your department and college", you should get a copy of the appropriate academic unit and college promotion and tenure expectations, and review those expectations as you prepare your portfolio.

From the process guide noted above, you will see that the materials assembled for your case contain both (1) elements that you provide and (2) additional elements assembled during the course of the review process. I want to focus solely on the five elements you are to provide:

- Curriculum Vitae
  - Personal Statement
  - Publications/Creative Materials
  - Evidence of Excellence in Teaching and Mentoring
  - Supplemental Materials
- } Combined limit of ≤ 50 pages

Following the strategy I suggested above, you should assemble each of these elements keeping in mind that you want to address the appropriate specific personnel action question noted above. With that goal, here are some suggestions and tips on putting these pieces together.

## Your Curriculum Vitae

As you know, *curriculum vitae* is Latin for “course of life”. The way you tell your “life story” can depend on your audience, so each audience likely requires a different format for your CV. In this case, the CV in your portfolio is the story of your professional academic life at ASU in the context of a specific personnel action question, so you should specially prepare an “academic CV” for that purpose. Make this academic CV clear and easy to interpret for an audience of people *outside* your discipline/department. Always seek guidance and tips from senior colleagues, and have someone outside your unit review your academic CV for their suggestions.

Disciplines have different expectations for a CV, but an academic CV should start with the following basic information:

- Your name, your department/school, your college, and the date your academic CV was prepared
- Educational background (degrees, institutions, and dates; listed in reverse chronological order)
- Academic/professional experience (positions, institutions, and dates, beginning with current position at ASU) listed in reverse chronological order

Subsequent sections of your academic CV should detail your scholarly products and activities in research, teaching, and service (in that order). Organize the CV into labeled sections and subsections, including breaks, as needed, for “Before employment at ASU” and “Since employment at ASU”.

Other suggestions include:

- For lists of publications and talks, have separate sections for peer-reviewed items and non-peer-reviewed items. You may also want to separate in-house talks, etc. from those presented outside ASU. If you have **multi-author works**, preface the list of publications by explaining what the order of authors’ names means in your discipline. For each multi-author work, indicate the significance of your contribution for those works where that contribution is significant. Indicate student or post-doc co-authors (e.g., underlining undergraduate names, boldface graduate student names, use asterisks for post-docs). In any publication list, always provide complete citations, including full author lists **in published order** for multi-authored works.
- Where appropriate, include patents and inventions.
- If funding is expected for your discipline, provide a summary table at the beginning of the funding section which indicates for each proposal the total proposed and awarded amounts **and your share of those amounts**. Separately list funded proposals from unfunded proposals; unfunded proposals indicate proposal activity and effort. [Note: If external funding is expected for your academic unit, an official funding summary will be provided by your department from the OKED database. If your CV numbers differ from the OKED numbers, get the OKED data corrected or explain the difference; the OKED numbers are considered the official institutional record and will take precedence over anything in your CV otherwise.]
- In the teaching section, list courses taught (noting any courses you developed), students mentored, student coauthors, graduate committee memberships (indicating which committees you chaired, and dates students graduated). List any pedagogical journal articles (indicate if peer-reviewed), published materials, and presentations. [Note: The department will supply a summary of the student course evaluation data obtained for your courses.]
- For the service section, list disciplinary service you provided (e.g., meetings chaired, referee service, board service), institutional service you delivered (university and college committees, etc.), department service you gave, and community service you rendered based on your disciplinary expertise.

## Your Personal Statement

Your four-page personal statement is a narrative that (1) fleshes out the story told by the academic CV and (2) projects that story into the future. Remember that this narrative should address the specific personnel action question mentioned above. You will be speaking directly to the reviewers of your file to describe why what you have done and will do in research, teaching, and service is important, and how your research, teaching, and service contributions impacted your discipline, unit, and institution.

This statement will be some of the most important writing in your career, so devote time to making this statement clear and cogent. Iterate drafts with, and ask for comments and suggestions from, both a few colleagues within your department (since this will be read and assessed by senior scholars in your discipline outside the institution) and – just as importantly – with ASU colleagues outside your department (since most of those who will assess your portfolio will be outside your department).

If you suspect that a question might naturally arise from your CV or any other materials in your portfolio (e.g., why is there a break in employment or publication record, limited external funding, etc.), use the personal statement to help contextualize and answer those questions. It is far better to acknowledge and offer your explanation of any shortcoming than to ignore it, and, thereby, require a reader with less knowledge of your situation to come up with his/her own.

## Your Publications and Creative Materials

You may select up to four publications or creative works for your portfolio. How do you choose? I would suggest that this depends on the specific personnel action question identified above. Take a look at those again and remind yourself of which one applies to you. Then I suggest:

- If you are going up for **tenure**, you will want to select materials that demonstrate *“excellence and the promise of continued excellence’ during your probationary period at ASU.”* To me, that suggests that, in the case of the tenure decision, regardless of what you did before you came to ASU, the evidence should demonstrate that you have succeeded in becoming excellent in the ASU environment. Choose the four items since you arrived at ASU that best indicate how you have succeeded in the ASU environment. If an item is multi-authored, your CV should have indicated your significant role and your personal statement should have contextualized that work.
- If you are going up for promotion, you will want to select materials that demonstrate *“your continuous excellent performance [has] developed a significant national or international scholarly reputation in your field”*. In this case, some materials might predate your promotion to associate professor or even your employment at ASU. The items selected should be the most impactful pieces of scholarship you have developed. If an item is multi-authored, your CV should have indicated your significant role and your personal statement should have contextualized that work.

In either case, these materials, your personal statement, and the CV will be provided to the external reviewers and all internal levels of review. Choose the items you believe make the best case.

## Your Evidence of Excellence in Teaching and Mentoring

*[Note: This part of the materials you submit begins a pair of elements in your portfolio which, together, may not exceed 50 pages. Neither element of this pair of elements will be sent to your external reviewers, but instead will only be available for internal review. Your academic unit and college may require certain elements be included in this section, which will also count against that limit. You will thus want to very carefully consider which items provide your best evidence.]*

What might constitute useful evidence in your portfolio that shows excellence in teaching and mentoring? The answer varies somewhat by discipline, but the common expectation is that the evidence assembled shows that students you have taught and mentored have become successful. With that in mind, good indicators of excellence in teaching and mentoring might include:

- Substantive peer reviews of your teaching gathered throughout your probationary period that indicate either continuous strong performance or show improvement during that time.
- Dissertations and theses for graduate students you supervised.
- Independent study projects and honor theses supervised for undergraduate students.
- Awards for outstanding teaching from your department, college, or institution.
- Evidence that your undergraduate and graduate students finished their degrees in a timely fashion.
- Evidence that your students moved on to graduate study or employment in part due to the skills and abilities you helped develop in them.
- Success of students in obtaining professional licensure when licensure requirements demand material covered in the coursework you taught.
- Positive data obtained for learning outcome measurements for the courses you have taught within academic programs in your department.
- Co-authorship of articles and presentations with students, particularly when those students present papers, etc. themselves based on the work they did with you.
- If students took an early course from you in a series of courses, feedback that indicates the students who took your course arrived well-prepared for the subsequent courses.
- Any publications and presentations that reflect the scholarship and study of teaching and learning.

This is only a very partial list of items. Every department, school, and college likely will have some unique outcomes for which measures might be defined. But you can see that these items of evidence focus on successful student outcomes rather than the “inputs” to teaching and learning. Given ASU’s focus on student success, the attention needs to be on outcomes in order to demonstrate excellence in the ASU environment.

In my opinion and based on my experience, I would say I have found the following items are far less helpful in demonstrating excellent teaching and mentoring: comments excerpted from student evaluations (those can be cherry-picked), copies of syllabi and course materials (unless you show what outcomes resulted), and lists of scholarships/fellowships received by students (those speak more to the quality of the student). Some department and colleges may require these, but you should be judicious in selection, and remember that those materials count against the 50-page limit.

## Your Supplemental Materials

*[Note: This part of the materials you submit is the second a pair of elements in your portfolio which, together, may not exceed 50 pages. These supplemental materials will not be sent to your external reviewers, but will be available for internal review. Your academic unit and college may require certain elements be included in this section, which will also count against that limit. You will thus want to very carefully consider which items provide your best evidence.]*

In this section, you provide additional evidence to answer your specific personnel action question. Since only internal levels of review see this material, this is not a good place to put evidence for meeting the expectation of “excellence and the promise of continued excellence” in research/ creative activity; the case for research/creative activity is primarily made by the information presented in the CV, the personal statement, and the (up to) four examples of scholarship noted earlier.

Within this section, you might include, for example:

- Assessments by others of your service to the profession, institution, or community arising from your disciplinary expertise.
- Work that promotes the success of ASU students in ways not covered earlier (advising student clubs and groups, voluntarily leading special study sessions, etc.)
- Examples of popular articles you have authored or co-authored that communicate the results and implications of your work and discipline to a lay audience.\*
- Examples of articles coauthored with students.\*
- Examples of interviews you have given to discuss your work with the broader community.\*
- Published reviews of your scholarly work that demonstrate the reception and impact of that work, if those reviews are not specifically referenced in your CV.\*

(\* Excerpts, summaries, or full citation information are better than complete documents and articles.)

### Summing up

We began with the strategy of assembling a file to answer a specific personnel action question:

- For tenure: *Within the context of your academic unit, have you demonstrated “excellence and the promise of continued excellence” during your probationary period at ASU?*
- For promotion to professor: *Since promotion to associate professor, and within the context of your academic unit, has your continuous excellent performance developed a significant national or international scholarly reputation in your field?*

When you get your portfolio together, always be sure to ask several colleagues (including colleagues outside your department) to review your portfolio for clarity, corrections, comments, and suggestions.

**Disclaimer:** *The only real insurance for a positive promotion or tenure decision is a successful career at ASU that yields copious evidence of “excellence and the promise of continued excellence” in research, teaching, and service within the context of the department and college, coupled to an effective and persuasive presentation of the evidence for that success. No strategy is foolproof, and successful examples likely can be found that go against any suggestion I provided above. But, given the strategy I have suggested and my experience, it is my hope that the ideas above provide some tips that will help you better present the evidence that arises from your career to scholars within and outside ASU.*

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**The 90-minute video of the session is viewable online to ASU faculty members. Please contact Karen Engler-Weber, coordinator for FWA, to receive the password and viewing link; her email address is**

**[Karen.Engler@ASU.edu](mailto:Karen.Engler@ASU.edu) .**