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# Academic Affairs Manual (ACD)

Effective: 7/1/1982

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## ACD 506-04: Tenure

### Purpose

To describe appointments with tenure and the review for tenure

### Sources

Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual - 6-201  
Office of the Provost of the University

### Applicability

Tenure-eligible and tenured faculty

### Policy

Tenure is a property right authorized by the Board of Regents and, through Board of Regents' delegation of authority, granted by the president to individuals. An individual's tenure at Arizona State University is located in a specific academic unit. Tenure is not transferable except as provided through university policy and procedure. See [ACD 505-04](#), "Transfer, Joint, and Affiliated Faculty and Academic Professional Appointments."

Appointments with tenure are those with a legitimate claim of entitlement to continued employment unless the tenured faculty member retires, resigns, or is dismissed or released in accord with [ACD 501](#), "Conditions of Faculty Service." Attainment of tenure can only occur through specific notification from the president and may not result from inaction or inadvertence. If a tenure-eligible faculty member applies for early tenure and the decision is negative, the faculty member remains in probationary status. Assistant professors reviewed for tenure (regular or expedited process) must be reviewed for promotion at the same time.

Tenure is awarded on the basis of excellence and the promise of continued excellence, which is measured not only by individual achievement but also by contributions to the academic unit's and university's current and future mission and objectives; thus the tenure review process of necessity takes into account the mission and objectives of each academic unit and the university during the assessment of the professional accomplishments of the faculty under review. See [ACD 202-01](#), "Faculty Responsibilities," for information related to responsibilities that are part of the review for tenure.

The rapidly changing character of research and its methodologies make it impossible for a university, even one of considerable size, scope, and resources, to have tenured faculty in every discipline. Therefore, appointments to tenure are offered to only those scholars whose disciplinary contributions are deemed excellent and whose ability to contribute to university priorities is also highly developed.

### Evaluation for Tenure

The tenure review is designed to ensure a fair and impartial process that is clear, unambiguous, comprehensive, and applied consistently and uniformly. This process is conducted in the following order where they exist: the academic unit personnel committee, academic unit chair/director, college personnel committee, supervising dean, university tenure and promotion committee, the provost of the university, and the president. Each of these units or individuals makes independent recommendations that are informed by previous recommendations. The president ultimately makes the decision for the award of tenure.

The evaluation process involves assessment of the performance of faculty responsibilities, including teaching, research, scholarship and/or creative activities, and service to the university, profession, and community. Candidates must be evaluated for tenure no later than the date indicated in the original offer letter or date amended by an authorized probationary period extension. For information about university tenure review requirements for academic unit bylaws, see [P3](#), "University Faculty Probationary, Tenure, and Promotion Requirements for Academic Unit Bylaws."

Specific information is required of candidates being reviewed for tenure. The material reviewed includes information provided by candidates, external review letters solicited by the academic unit, and may include additional information requested by an individual or committee to clarify or explain information provided at an earlier stage that has been approved by the next-level administrator. Recommendations for external evaluators are made equally by the candidate and the academic unit chair/director; the selection of reviewers will be equally divided between the candidate's and the chair/director's list. The chair/director also consults with the supervising dean about her or his list of external reviewers. Typically there should be a minimum of five external evaluators who are professors in highly respected colleges/universities (e.g., peer or aspirational peer institutions). These reviewers may not have a close professional or personal connection with the candidate (e.g., co-author, co-PI, or member of the candidate's dissertation committee). For information about file content requirements, see [P5](#), "Tenure and/or Promotion Process Guide."

#### Notification of Recommendations and Final Decision

**Academic unit level:** the chair/director shall provide an oral statement of the strengths and weaknesses of the case to the candidate based on the reviews at the academic unit level; the candidate may choose to withdraw from further consideration at

this point.

**College level:** the supervising dean shall provide an oral statement of the strengths and weaknesses of the case to the candidate based on the reviews at the college level; the candidate may choose to withdraw from further consideration at this point.

**University level:** no notification is made by the university committee.

**Final decision:** the final decision regarding the award of tenure is made through written notification to the candidate by the president.

Review/personnel committee members at every level shall not discuss deliberations with candidates. External evaluation letters shall not be shared with candidates.

#### **Denial of Tenure**

The denial of tenure or retention need not be construed as due to failure or poor performance on the candidate's part. Considerations such as the need for a different area of specialization or for a new emphasis within the unit, the lack of a continuing position, the need to shift a position or resources to another department, or the opportunity for a more vigorous program in teaching, research, or service may dictate that the individual not be retained or granted tenure. Faculty who believe that denial of tenure was in violation of ASU policy may file a grievance in accord with [ACD 509-02](#), "Grievance Policy for Faculty."

#### **Final Decision**

The final decision on promotion, tenure, or retention is made by the president or designee. Notification of the decision is provided by May 12 of the review year.

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## Expedited Review for Tenure

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#### **Current Faculty**

The university reserves the right to conduct an expedited review for awarding tenure to a faculty member when such action will serve the best interests of ASU. The decision to conduct an expedited tenure review is an exception to the regular tenure review described above and will be approved only in extraordinary circumstances, which could include, but are not limited to:

1. the decision of the university to respond to an offer of other employment to a current faculty member whom ASU desires to retain
2. the receipt of an extraordinary award or honor by a faculty member that is likely to generate offers of employment or brings distinction to the individual and the institution and
3. other circumstances that the provost of the university determines warrant expedited tenure review.

ASU has no obligation to consider or approve an expedited review at the request of the faculty member even for the circumstances listed above. For information about the expedited review procedures, see [P4](#), "Expedited Review for Tenure-Eligible Faculty Process Guide."

Every effort will be made to conclude an expedited review within 21 calendar days following the initiation of the review or as soon as possible thereafter.

#### **Decision**

The president of the university will make the decision to award or deny expedited tenure and appropriate faculty rank and will notify the provost of the university and dean orally as soon as possible after decision is made. The dean will notify the unit head and the faculty candidate as soon as possible thereafter. The president will provide a written notice of the decision within ten days to the same university administrators and the unit head and faculty member.

#### **Denial of Tenure**

If the expedited award of tenure is denied, the faculty member will be reviewed under [ACD 506-03](#), "Faculty Probationary Appointments" during probation, under [ACD 506-10](#), "Annual Evaluations of Faculty" and, if otherwise eligible, may be considered for tenure under the regular tenure review described in this policy.

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## University-Level Review of New Hires with Tenure

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#### **Candidates with Tenure at Peer or Peer Aspirational Institutions**

For candidates employed at universities defined as academic unit/college peers or aspirational peers and who currently hold the rank at which they would be hired, the provost of the university, and the president will review the curriculum vitae and reference letters or notes from reference calls.

#### **Candidates with Tenure at Non-Peer or Non-Peer Aspirational Institutions**

For candidates employed with tenure at a university that is not a peer or aspirational peer of the unit/college, and who would be hired at the same rank that they now hold, the curriculum vitae and reference letters (or notes from reference calls) will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the university promotion and tenure committee, the provost of the university, and the president. The academic unit chair/dean should provide a letter detailing the academic unit college vote and rationale for supporting the hire with tenure and contextualizing the candidate's curriculum vitae for university level reviewers.

#### **Candidates without Tenure at the Time of Hire**

For candidates who are not tenured at their current university, an expedited tenure review will be conducted, including faculty and administrative review(s) at all levels. To accommodate the need for prompt decision-making:

1. the college personnel committee review may be bypassed so long as there is faculty review at the unit and university levels and
2. the university faculty review may be conducted by a subcommittee of the university promotion and tenure committee. The review will include external review letters solicited from the candidate's and the unit head/dean's lists.

See [P4](#), "Expedited Review for Tenure-Eligible Faculty Process Guide" for more information about this review.

In all cases, the final decision on hire, rank, and tenure rests with the university president.

The [schedule of personnel actions](#) is available on the Web site of the Office of the Provost of the University.

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## Cross-References

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1. [ACD 202-01](#), "Faculty Responsibilities"
2. [ACD 506-03](#), "Faculty Probationary Appointments"
3. [ACD 506-05](#), "Faculty Promotion"
4. [ACD 505-04](#), "Transfer, Joint, and Affiliated Faculty and Academic Professional Appointments."

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