UCAPT

INFO FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

USC University of Southern California

WHAT IS UCAPT?

Faculty governance necessitates that the ultimate recommendation on key personnel decisions is made by faculty committees at the university level.

UCAPT reviews and provides advice for appointments, promotions and tenure.

The Provost, as designated by the President, reviews all evaluations and notes, and makes their decision based on the recommendation of UCAPT.

UCAPT OVERVIEW

UCAPT consists of 6 disciplinary panels:

- Arts
- Clinical Sciences
- Humanities
- Life Sciences
- Natural Sciences & Engineering
- Social Sciences

If a case is interdisciplinary, an ad-hoc hybrid panel is formed from existing UCAPT panels.

There are also panels for:

- Librarian promotions and continuing appointment
- Teaching faculty with distinction
- RTPC (and adjunct/part-time) mixed decision cases

UCAPT OVERVIEW

UCAPT sees around 100 dossiers per year, spread across all the panels and types.

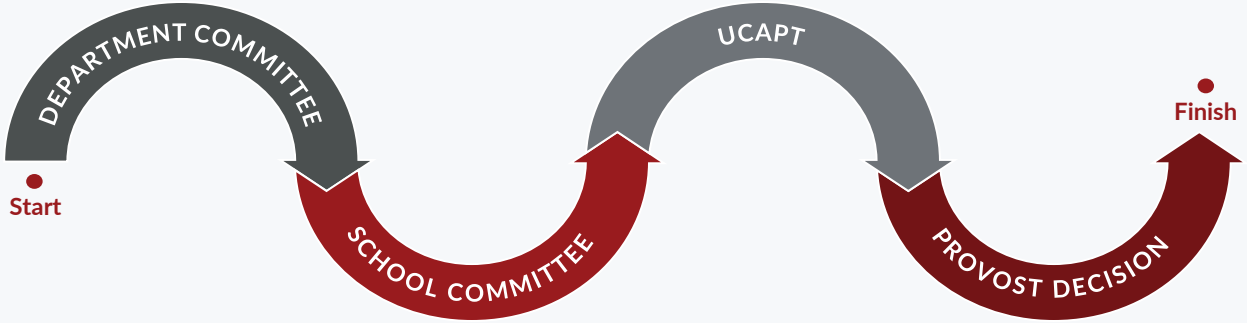
The University designates three deadlines for school's to submit their dossiers by:

- **October 15:** Promotion dossiers not involving tenure (Promotion to Full Professor, Promotion to Clinical Scholar)
- **February 1**: Tenure dossiers (Up-or-Out decisions)
- **March 15:** Senior lateral appointment dossiers (external associate or full professors)
- **March 15:** Teaching with Distinction dossiers

In extraordinary cases, the Provost may ask UCAPT to consider a dossier off-cycle. In these cases, we'll reach out to the panels to determine availability and scheduling.

We strive to turnaround decisions within 3 months after submission. Tenure dossiers must be decided on and notification must be sent by **May 15**.

PROMOTION & UCAPT



Promotion cases typically follow the above flow.

- The department creates and submits a promotion dossier to the school and the school submits the dossier to the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs by our deadline.
- The dossier is read for completeness and accuracy and routed to the appropriate UCAPT panel.
- The UCAPT panel reviews and meets and provides a recommendation to the Provost.
- The Provost makes the ultimate decision, weighing all previous steps, and a notification is sent to the Dean. The Dean notifies the department chair or the faculty member directly.

If multiple cases are submitted from the same department, they are placed in different rounds of UCAPT review, if possible, so that they aren't unduly compared to each other. Therefore, notification at different times in the term is normal and does not correlate at all to the strength of the case for promotion.

UCAPT MANUAL (2022)

https://policy.usc.edu/appointments-promotions-tenure/

1. Standard and Evaluation
2. Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Process
3. Information for Tenure-Track Assistant Professors
4. Information for Full Professor Candidates and Senior Lateral Appointments
5. Information for Special RTPC Designations
6. Information for Librarians and RTPC Faculty
7. The Dossier
8. Template for Solicitation Letters for Reviewers
9. Appendix

DOSSIERS

DOSSIER CONTENT

0. Recommendation for Appointment form or Recommendation for Promotion Form
1. Administrative and Faculty Assessments with Quantitative Data
2. CV
3. Personal Statement
4. Teaching Record
5. Service Record
6. External Reviewer Letters
7. Appendices: Evidence of Scholarship, Performance, and Teaching

DOSSIER CONSTRUCTION

1. GATHER candidate materials (CV, personal statement, publications or other works)
2. SEND those to the external referees (list developed by department review committee and usually approved by the Dean)
3. CREATE COHORT ANALYSIS after external letters are received, as they are prompted to suggest some names
4. ASSESS the dossier via the departmental faculty (thorough faculty committee report on the case, and final faculty vote)
5. ASSESS VIA CHAIR'S MEMO, as this can fill in gaps from the faculty committee report, provides extra insight on their discussion and vote, include any issues from the cohort analysis or external letters WITHOUT NAMES, and state department needs and strategic goals in relation to the case
6. SEND to the school level for their assessment

CHAIR'S MEMO

The department report should address the following topics and explain/apply the cohort analysis:

- Standards of the discipline
- Quality of the candidate's works
- Funding sources, if applicable
- Citations and/or impact
- Authorship, co-authorship, and collaboration and their relevance
- Upcoming projects
- Discipline and interdisciplinary relevance of current and future projects
- Doubts or qualifications, including from the external reviewers but without naming or quoting directly
- Departmental discussion and votes, especially any disagreements

Please refer to section 7.1.5 of UCAPT Manual for more information.

DOSSIER CHALLENGES & ISSUES

Context Issues

The UCAPT panelists see dossiers from different schools at once, so it's better to over-explain:

1. The cohort, how it was chosen and why, with the chart and in the faculty committee or chair's memo
2. Your discipline's top tier for research excellence, including: Presses, journals, grants, conferences, etc.
    1. Making these clear (and naming them) in the memos and cohort analysis chart helps the panels greatly
3. Any issues with letter writers:
    1. Lack of responses or substance, declines, additions after the first round, interdisciplinary writers, how the writers represent the candidate's field
    2. Do not directly quote verbatim from the external letters or give their names
        1. What is most helpful is an informed interpretation and an analysis of key issues

DOSSIER CHALLENGES & ISSUES

External Reviewer substance issues or conflicts

Substance

- 5 substantive arms-length letters are required.
- Substantive external letters are hopefully at least 2-3 pages and address a couple of the candidate's publications in detail, providing analysis of their impact

Conflicts

- Arm's-length reviewers are not collaborators, friends, current or former colleagues, former fellow grad/post-doc students, or former mentors/advisors
  - Candidate and reviewer should not have overlapped at another institution in the same program
- Reviewers may have met the candidate at a conference or other professional activities
- Please provide their relationship to the candidate, if any, in the reviewer chart with the quote from the letter
  - E.g. "… we met a couple of times at a conference but have not collaborated on any projects…"

TEMPLATES

- Dossier Preparation Checklist
- Faculty Committee Report Template
- Cohort Analysis Chart Template
- Cohort Analysis Overview
- Revised Template for Solicitation of Arm's-length Letters (2022)
- External Referee Letter Chart Template
- School level letter template – informing the candidate of their successful case

Templates are available on the Dean's Portal (Under Policies & Provost Memos – Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure. Please connect with your Vice Dean/Dean of Faculty to help access these documents.

PROMOTION & TENURE UPDATES

NEXT STEPS

- Proposed options to the Provost:
  - University messaging to faculty
    - Reaffirm the commitment to promotion, tenure, and faculty well-being
  - Impact Statements & Dossier preparation process
    - Develop opportunity for faculty to detail the any impacts they may have experienced in relation recent federal policy changes
    - Provide external reviewers context to any impacts
  - TDD extension considerations
    - Develop a policy for broader recognition of impacts and clearly communicate expectations for faculty
  - Dean's messaging to faculty
    - Establish ways for faculty to provide updates of their concerns
    - Provide consistent expectations and mentoring support

- Questionnaire is being developed for Chair's to give input on challenges faculty may be facing due to ongoing federal policy changes.

DEANS OF FACULTY INPUT

- University messaging
  - Need for reaffirmation of the legitimacy of scholarship and research
  - Clear articulation of expectations
  - Clear guidance for junior faculty, especially if they feel the need to pivot or are working in areas that are now being scrutinized
  - Reassurance to our faculty that they are valued members of our community
- Impact statements
  - Opportunity for faculty to submit a statement
  - Needs to be encouraged and not seen as a sign of overall dossier/promotion weakness
  - Research Funding Impacts
    - More competition for fewer dollars
    - Longer waits for disbursement and decisions
    - Potential changes with indirect costs is concerning

DEANS OF FACULTY INPUT

- Adapting Dossier preparation process
  - Concerns with how cohort comparisons can be conducted and how external reviewers will recognize these challenges
    - Should the school's provide contextual language in solicitation letters
- UCAPT Process
  - Discussing with our UCAPT panelists how to recognize the potential impact of federal policy changes
  - May not be immediate, but will be an ongoing issue
- TDD extensions
  - Blanket extensions (like COVID) probably isn't needed at this time
  - Leniency and clear communication of expectations can be communicated to individuals who may want to extend their TDD

DEANS OF FACULTY INPUT

Other General Insights

- Consensus is that USC should demonstrate leniency regarding individual faculty's impact from federal policy changes
  - Big10 Engineering schools are generally taking a wait-and-see approach
  - As this is affecting schools across the nation, there's a likelihood that we'll see similar impacts when comparing faculty with their cohorts
  - Still, there are some areas that are being impacted more than others
    - DEI, Climate, certain health subfields, etc.
- Determining who is impacted
  - Current faculty who are in their 2nd and 3rd years may be more impacted and may not know the true extent of impact for 1-2 more years
- USC's Financial Resiliency impact
  - There's confusion regarding faculty's ability to travel, grant spending, and hosting/inviting talks/conferences

QUESTIONS?

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