Great Falls College Montana State University Tenure and Promotion Handbook

Updated 4/25/2025

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Purpose

This handbook serves two broad purposes, with the ultimate goal of making the tenure and promotion process more transparent:

1. To help faculty members navigate the tenure and promotion process.
2. To assist the Tenure and Promotion Committee in the portfolio evaluation process.

Scope

This handbook serves as a guide for the development and evaluation of professional development plans (PDPs) and tenure and promotion portfolios, as described in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) which is the governing document. All tenure appointments and promotion decisions ultimately rest with the CEO/Dean.

Questions regarding a faculty member's eligibility for tenure and/or promotion should be directed to Human Resources. Questions regarding the application process, portfolios, professional development plans, and all other tenure and promotion concerns should be directed to the Tenure and Promotion Committee Chair.

Authority

Articles 9.1 (Tenure) and 10.1I (Level Definition and Threshold Criteria for Promotion) of the Montana Two-Year College Faculty Association CBA, Great Falls College MSU policy 203.1 and Great Falls College MSU procedure 203.1.1 provide the basis for this document and define the contractual obligations, policies, and procedures that apply to the tenure and promotion process.

Overview of the Tenure Process

Article 9.1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement details the requirements to achieve tenure. See the current CBA for complete information. See the Tenure and Promotion Procedure 203.1.1 for additional information regarding the tenure process, as the information below is a brief overview.

Timeline for Tenure

No Later than May 1 – Notification of Candidacy for Tenure

Each candidate eligible for tenure will be notified by the Academic Affairs Coordinator. The Committee Chair will receive notification of the candidate's service-time qualifications from the Executive Director of Human Resources.

September 20 – Candidate Portfolio Due

Each candidate for tenure will provide each member of the Tenure and Promotion Committee and the CEO/Dean access to an electronic portfolio. Portfolios may be submitted no earlier than the last contract day of the preceding academic year and no later than September 20.

November 15 – Committee Recommendations to the CEO/Dean

Once the Committee reaches a decision, the Chair will notify the candidate of that decision in writing without revealing an exact vote count. The Chair will then provide the CEO/Dean with an executive summary or tenure recommendations. The Committee will not provide an explanation for a negative tenure recommendation.

January 15– CEO/Dean's Official Notification
For tenure applications, the CEO/Dean will notify the candidate, with a copy to the Committee Chair, of their recommendation. The CEO/Dean will forward tenure recommendations for approval by the Regents through their established processes so that the tenure becomes effective the following academic year.

Overview of the Promotion Process

Article 10.1 H-J of the Collective Bargaining Agreement details the requirements for promotion increases. See the current CBA for complete information. See the Tenure and Promotion Procedure 203.1.1 for additional information regarding the promotion process, as the information below is a brief overview.

Faculty members are responsible for keeping track of their promotion eligibility. Human Resources will not notify faculty of their eligibility to apply for promotion.

Timeline for Promotion

February 15 – Candidate Promotion Portfolios Due
Each candidate for promotion will provide each member of the Tenure and Promotion Committee and the CEO/Dean with access to an electronic portfolio. Faculty may apply for promotion during the year in which they meet the eligibility criteria.

March 15 – Committee Recommendations to the CEO/Dean
Once the Committee reaches a decision, the Chair will notify the candidate of that decision in writing without revealing an exact vote count. The Chair will then provide the CEO/Dean with an executive summary of promotion recommendations. In the event of a negative promotion recommendation, the candidate may request a meeting with the Tenure and Promotion Committee to discuss reasons for the negative promotion recommendation.

April 1 - Candidate Appeal Process
The candidate will have until April 1 to respond to the Chair in the event of a negative promotion recommendation and request a meeting with the entire Committee to discuss the decision.

April 15 – CEO/Dean's Official Notification
For promotion applications, the CEO/Dean will notify the candidate, with a copy to the Committee Chair, of their decision. The candidate will have ten working days to respond in writing to the CEO/Dean in the event of a negative promotion decision.

Professional Development Plans

What is a Professional Development Plan? Why do I need one?

The Professional Development Plan (PDP) is the document used to indicate what professional development activities faculty members have completed, or will complete, in order to meet promotion requirements.

The PDP helps faculty gain approval for professional development and serves to track progress toward promotion.

Prior approval is recommended. Professional development activities not listed on an approved PDP is not guaranteed to apply to promotion applications.

PDPs must be discussed with the faculty member's Division Director and are approved by the Tenure and Promotion Committee. Once approved, the professional development activities on the PDP are permanently accepted, as long as faculty provide evidence of these activities in their promotion application.

When should I complete and submit a Professional Development Plan?

When possible, PDPs should be submitted prior to participating in professional development activities. It is, however, acceptable to submit PDPs after participating in professional development, with the understanding that approval is at the discretion of the Division Director and the Tenure and Promotion Committee.

Plans may be created and submitted as frequently as needed, but the Tenure and Promotion Committee only reviews plans twice per year. Faculty will likely have multiple PDPs as they progress toward each level of promotion.

New plans should include only professional development that has not previously been submitted for approval. Any changes to professional development previously approved by the Tenure & Promotion Committee would be communicated in the application for promotion.

What is the PDP submission/review process?

1. Faculty members complete the PDP form.

2. Faculty members review the PDP form with their Division Director. If the Division Director has questions regarding activities included in the Professional Development Plan, the Division Director should consult with the Tenure and Promotion Committee Chair.

3. Faculty members submit their completed, signed professional development plans to the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee.

a. Submission deadlines are Sept. 20 for fall and Feb. 15 for spring.
b. **Evidence supporting completion of professional development activities does not need to be submitted with the PDP form**. Faculty should retain evidence of professional development completion for submission with their promotion portfolios.

4. The committee reviews and approves the PDP form. If the Committee has concerns regarding activities included in the Professional Development Plan, the Committee Chair will contact the faculty member and Division Director.

5. Upon approval from the committee, the Committee Chair will sign the PDP form and return the original to the faculty member. A scanned copy is retained by the Committee. Faculty are responsible for retaining their PDP forms and evidence supporting completion, as well as tracking their total professional development hours.

6. Faculty members who are submitting a significant number of professional development items may want to attach the Professional Development Tracking Form to the PDP form. This form is used as part of the promotion portfolio to compile all professional development activities.

Completing the Professional Development Plan

All relevant sections of the PDP should be completed.

Coursework section

- List one-time training experiences here.
- Coursework that is not part of a degree or certificate program should be listed here.
- Coursework that is part of a degree or certificate program may be listed here **if the program will not be completed prior to promotion.** Do not list coursework that is part of a degree or certificate program if the program will be completed prior to promotion.
- Hours are calculated as the actual number of hours spent on the professional development activity.
    - Travel time, meals, breaks, and optional social hours should not be included in the hourly calculation.
    - Academic credit hours should be converted using the formula 1 credit = 30 professional development hours.
    - Published writing should be converted to professional development hours using the formula in Appendix A.
- Complete the column labeled **"**How does this support your work at the college or professional growth?" to facilitate conversations with the Division Director. If it is not clear how a professional development activity supports your work at the college, additional documentation may be required.

Degree program section

If **all** credits from a degree or certificate program will be used for promotion, list the program in the degree/certificate section and **not** in the "Coursework/Individual Trainings" section. If selected classes will be used for promotion, list those classes individually and do not use the degree/program section of the form.

Signature section

Faculty should sign their PDP and indicate the number of hours submitted on that PDP. Do not include hours previously submitted.

Faculty should discuss the PDP with their Division Director and secure the Division Director's signature prior to submitting the PDP to the Tenure and Promotion Committee for review.

Examples of Acceptable Professional Development

Because the Professional Development Plan (PDP) is highly individualized, faculty members should work closely with their Division Director to determine the best path toward promotion.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement Article 10.1.I.4 provides the following guidance regarding professional development:

> Activities include experiences that advance a faculty member's professional (educational and occupational) skills, knowledge, and abilities, and experiences that maintain a faculty member's currency with technology and practices in education and/or the occupation(s) for which they prepare/educate students for employment or further education. Participation in these experiences usually results in curricular changes or increased teaching effectiveness. These experiences are usually gained through participation in activities such as, but not limited to: college coursework; business and industry-conducted training; professional organization workshops and conferences; seminars; etc.

Should the faculty member and their Division Director disagree on the inclusion of professional development activities, the Division Director and faculty member may discuss the activities with the Tenure and Promotion Committee Chair. If further mediation is required, the faculty member may enter an appeals process with the CEO/Dean.

The following is a list of examples of typically acceptable types of professional development. **This is not an exhaustive list.**

- Degree and certificate programs
- Undergraduate- and graduate-level coursework meeting the guidance provided by CBA Article 10.1.I.4 (above)
- Trainings offered through the Teaching and Learning Center related to instruction or student support
- Asynchronous training modules
- Mandatory training required by the campus that relates to instruction or student support (not including compliance training—see below); e.g., Indian Ed for All,

assessment training

- Conference attendance
- Presentations:
    - First time presenting: faculty members may claim up to three times the presentation length as professional development hours plus the actual presentation time
    - Subsequent presentations: faculty members may claim the presentation length plus one hour of preparation time
- Training required for program accreditation
- Training required for maintaining professional licenses or certifications, e.g., CPR training for healthcare areas
- Serving in a leadership capacity (e.g., on a board or advisory committee) of a professional organization related to one's instructional area
- Participation in webinars related to one's instructional area
- Publication of a manuscript or article (see Appendix A)
- Leading off-site campus activities with students (e.g., community performances, attending conferences with students) that go beyond the requirements of assigned courseloads

Examples of Unacceptable Professional Development

The following is a list of examples of activities that are typically unacceptable for the purpose of professional development. **This is not an exhaustive list. Faculty should work closely with their Division Director to determine the best path toward promotion.**

- Mandatory compliance training, e.g., equity training, Title IX, sexual harassment, cybersecurity
- Committee work (may count as service to the college)
- Appointed positions, e.g., department chair
- Volunteer work, on campus or off (may count as service to the college or community)
- Preparation for graduate degree comprehensive exams and/or time spent writing a thesis or dissertation
- Entrepreneurial ventures and side work/second jobs

Portfolios

Faculty portfolios must be built in Canvas. These portfolios serve multiple purposes and will be used for faculty evaluation, tenure application, and promotion application.

Faculty members must contact the Teaching and Learning Center to request a Canvas course shell in which to create their portfolio. The portfolio template course is entitled ePortfolio Template for Faculty Evals, Tenure, and Promotion

When a portfolio course shell is created, it will follow the Tenure and Promotion Committee's current approved template. ***Portfolios created using previous versions of the template should be revised to include all the required components listed below.***

Faculty members are responsible for seeking support from the appropriate campus resources. The T&P chair will answer questions regarding content, but faculty should work with the Teaching and Learning center for technical issues, including Canvas course shell setup.

Completing the portfolio

Each portfolio must contain the required components for each type of portfolio submission (evaluation, tenure, or application). Any portfolio modules that are not applicable to the faculty member's current portfolio submission may be hidden from view.

All Portfolios

The home page of the portfolio must include the following information in an announcement:

- Your name and the Division in which you teach
- Purpose of the application - whether tenure, promotion, or evaluation
- Date of hire/date of last promotion
- Current Level
- Years of service at current level
- Level requested (for promotion applications only)
- Degrees held

Faculty Evaluation (in Modules)

Faculty should follow the guidelines set by the faculty evaluation handbook each year. All required components for annual evaluations should be included in the "Faculty Evaluation" section of the portfolio.

Materials submitted as part of the faculty evaluation process may also be needed for future applications for tenure and promotion. Use the portfolio to store all faculty evaluation documents so that the required materials can easily be linked or copied to the tenure and promotion sections of the portfolio as needed.

Promotion Applications (in Modules)

Promotion applications should include the following submodules within the portfolio:

- Cover Letter & CV/Resume
  - Cover letter
  - CV/resume
- Signed Faculty Evaluation Forms
  - Include all forms since date of hire or last promotion (in chronological order)
  - Supporting materials, e.g., sample syllabus, sample assessments, are not needed.
- Student evaluation summaries
  - Include the summarized reports for all courses taught since date of hire or last promotion. Summary reports from 2018 or later can be accessed from Campus Labs. Print the reports to a PDF file and upload them to the portfolio.
  - Student evaluations should be stored in chronological order e.g., Fall 2021, Spring

2022, Summer 2022)

- Professional Development Tracking Sheet
- Evidence to support completion of approved professional development
  - May include transcripts, CEU certificates, proof of completion or attendance, conference agenda, etc.
  - Note: official transcripts of coursework must be submitted to the Human Resources department before promotion is finalized.
- Approved/signed Professional Development Plan(s)
- Bulleted list of service to the institution and relevant work outside the institution (see CBA 10.1 I. 1., a-m), with dates included.

Tenure Applications (in Modules)

Tenure applications should include the following submodules within the portfolio:

- Cover Letter & CV/Resume
  Cover letter
  CV/resume
- Signed Faculty Evaluation Forms
  - Include all forms since date of hire (in chronological order)
  - Supporting materials, e.g., sample syllabus or sample assessments, are not needed.
- Student evaluation summaries
  - Include the summarized reports for all courses taught since date of hire or last promotion. Summary reports from 2018 and later can be accessed from Campus Labs. Print the reports to a PDF file and upload them to the portfolio.
  - Student evaluations should be stored in chronological order e.g., Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Summer 2022)
- Bulleted list of service to institution, community, and/or discipline, with dates included.

Submitting the portfolio

Once the portfolio is complete and ready for review, faculty members are responsible for adding all Tenure and Promotion committee members and the CEO/Dean to the portfolio. A list of current committee members can be found on the committee webpage. To add members to the portfolio in Canvas:

- Go to People
- Click the +People button
- Add the email addresses for each committee member
- Select the Observer role
- Click Next to review the Changes
- Click Add Users to complete the process

Faculty members should inform the Tenure and Promotion Committee chair that the portfolio is ready for review by the established deadline.

Appendix A: Converting Published Work into Professional Development Hours

Hours will be granted based on word count, not page count. Words counted include only words that appear in the published product.

All writing under 1,200 words (e.g., feature article, essay, poem) will be granted 10 hours of work. All writing over 1,200 words will be granted 1 hour of work per 125 words or (= Total words * .008). In the event that the total hours is not a whole number, the total hours will be rounded up. Co-authoring materials may lessen the number of professional development hours granted per word.

Published work must be related to the faculty member's instructional area. The writer might have to defend this relationship.

The work must be published by a nationally recognized academic or commercial press; small presses should belong to a professional organization (e.g., PubWest). Work may be published online or digitally. The writer may have to defend the credibility of their publisher and venue. They may also have to defend the existence of any perceived Conflicts of Interest with their publisher.

Appendix B: GFC Faculty Processes

The diagram presented on the following page illustrates the different processes on campus that relate to employee evaluation and compensation. The Tenure and Promotion Committee oversees the Tenure and Promotion process only. The Evaluation process is completed with the faculty member's Division Director and the Graduate Degree Salary Adjustment is processed through the Human Resources Office.

Evaluation	Promotion	Tenure	Graduate Degree Salary Adjustment
Goal: Formal, Periodic Feedback	Goal: Increase Pay Level (Levels 1 – 4)	Goal: Grant tenure status	Goal: Increase Pay (flat amount)
Timing: annually for untenured faculty; every three-years for tenured faculty	Timing: variable, depends on when the faculty meets the criteria for promotion to the next level	Timing: Faculty apply for promotion during the fall of their fifth year	Timing: Faculty apply when the degree is awarded, the increase is applied in the next academic year contract.
Due Date: Multiple dates	Due Date: February 15th	Due Date: September 20th	Due Date: n/a
Process: Completed with Division Director using the ePortfolio	Process: Apply with Tenure & Promotion Committee using the ePortfolio	Process: Apply with Tenure & Promotion Committee using the ePortfolio	Process: Provide official transcripts to Human Resources
Forms: Faculty Evaluation Form, Instructional Evaluation Form, Supporting Documents	Forms: Cover Letter, CV, Faculty Evaluation Forms, Student Evaluation Summaries, Professional Development Plans, Professional Development Tracker, Supporting Documents	Forms: Cover Letter, CV, Faculty Evaluation Forms, Student Evaluation Summaries, Supporting Documents	Forms: Official Transcripts
Resources: Collective Bargaining Agreement, Faculty Evaluation Handbook, Annual Training	Resources: Collective Bargaining Agreement, Policy 203.1, Procedure 203.1.1, Tenure & Promotion Handbook	Resources: Collective Bargaining Agreement, Policy 203.1, Procedure 203.1.1, Tenure & Promotion Handbook	Resources: Collective Bargaining Agreement