

Chemistry Responses to the NatSci RPT Unit Policies & Procedures Questionnaire

Unit Review and Recommendation

“As provided in the *Bylaws for Academic Governance*, the faculty, operating in the advisory mode, is to provide advice to the chairperson/director as described in unit bylaws. Each department, school, and comparable unit is required to have procedures and criteria that are clearly formulated and relevant to evaluating the performance of faculty members (see [Statement on Non-Tenured Faculty in the Tenure System](#), *Faculty Handbook*).”

1. How are candidates informed about unit standards and expectations for reappointment, tenure, and promotion? Are there written guidelines?

This begins with the letter of offer. They are also broadly described in our bylaws. Expectations are also shared as part of the annual review process. This process includes a written request for the type of information asked for in Form D and which, when prepared in a cumulative document, makes the basis for the promotion package that will be reviewed by our RPT committee and the outside reviewers.

2. When does the candidate meet with the unit leader and/or appropriate faculty review committee to discuss the procedures for the unit RPT review?

In June, the Chair meets with all candidates for promotion. Assistant professor who are up for promotion and associate professors that indicate their plan to go up for promotion are informed of the procedures. The RPT committee is established at this time and the Chair of the committee will again inform the candidates of the procedures by late summer or early in the fall semester.

3. When are joint-appointment candidates informed how their case will be handled in each unit? How are joint appointment actions coordinated?

The major department takes the lead, but we make sure the RPT committee contains faculty from both departments. This usually arranged through communication between the Chairs. Once the lead department makes its recommendation we will meet and decide to support or not support that recommendation. We've only had one case in the past 20 years where there was any disagreement. In this instance, both RPT committees got together and reached a common opinion.

4. Faculty bylaws require that each candidate be given the opportunity to meet the appropriate faculty (or representative faculty committee) to discuss their case: whom do candidates meet with and when does this meeting occur?

The Chair of the RPT committee will meet with the candidates late summer or early in the fall semester to be sure the candidate knows what to provide. This info will be reviewed by the committee and a member of the committee will let the candidate know if the package is in good order or if it needs to be refined before the package goes out for review, ideally in late September or early October. After the RPT committee makes their recommendation (early December) the Chair of the Department will meet with the candidate.

5. How is the candidate's teaching portfolio evaluated, and by whom?

The candidate's teaching portfolio is evaluated by the committee and the outside letter writers. As part of the RPT committee's review, the direct observations of the candidate's teaching that are made by peers each year are considered and considered in the context of the portfolio. The portfolio, like the entire package, is also made available to all faculty of the proper rank and discussed at the meeting during which the RPT committee makes its recommendation. The Chair also reviews the document.

6. Is peer teaching observation required in your unit? If so, who carries it out?

Yes. These observations are made each year for assistant and associate professors. Faculty members who teach related courses carry out the peer observations. They are chosen by the RPT committee.

7. Which faculty (or representative faculty committee) provide advice to the chair/director on each of the issues of reappointment, promotion and/or tenure, and promotion to professor? Which faculty vote on these actions?

The RPT committee Chair writes a letter to the Department Chair addressing all issues. That letter is read to all tenured faculty of the appropriate rank (associate professors for assistant professors being considered for promotion and full professors for associate professors being considered for promotion). All faculty members can comment and advise the Chair. Our bylaws allow all tenured associate professors, even those with minor appointments in Chemistry, to vote on assistant professors being considered for promotion. Similarly, all tenured full professors, even those with minor appointments in Chemistry, may vote on associate professors being considered for promotion. An official vote of the appropriate rank faculty consulted is taken and reported to the college as part of the Form D package.

8. Does a faculty member's departmental mentor participate in the review process and, if so, how?

Our bylaws don't dictate any role. In practice mentors may or may not be on the RPT committee, but if not, the committee often solicits their input. Of course they are entitled to offer their observations and thoughts during the faculty meeting where the RPT committee makes their recommendation.

9. When are candidates informed of the recommendation of the chair/director?

Very shortly after the RPT committee makes their recommendation to the faculty and a vote is taken (usually early December).

Completion of RPT Documentation

All candidates for reappointment to assistant professor, promotion to associate professor, the granting of tenure, and promotion to professor are responsible for providing the following information requested in Form D:

Form D-IVA (Instruction)

Form D-IVB (Research and Creative Activities)

NatSci Funded Grants Only worksheet

Form D-IVC (Service)

Form D-IVD (Additional Reporting)

Form D-IVE (Grant Proposal summary)

Research Essay

Teaching Essay

Teaching Portfolio

CV

Names of suggested external referees (tenure and promotion candidates)

1. By what time does the candidate need to provide the chair/director with the information listed above?

Much of the information that goes into the Form-D's (but not the Form-D's themselves), the research essay, the teaching portfolio, and the CV are requested to be in the hands of the RPT Chair by late September so that they can be sent to the outside reviewers. With respect to outside reviewers, we ask the candidate for 10 names from which we will seek 5 letters to complement the 5 letters requested from reviewers not suggested by the candidate. The teaching essay and the parts of the Form D's that the candidate fills out are asked for by late December / early January.

2. What clerical assistance is available to candidates in filling our Form D and gathering the necessary information?

The RPT documentation is given to the department administrator and Chair's assistant who go over the documentation before it is submitted to make sure that all of the information that is needed is included and is accurate.

See the [*Guidelines for Faculty Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure in the College of Natural Science at Michigan State University*](#) and the tenure system policies section of the [*MSU Faculty Handbook*](#) for details. Form D, including the portions completed by the unit/department and the candidate is due in the NatSci Dean's Office by December 15 of the review year for reappointment cases and January 15 of the review year for tenure and promotion cases.