

REVIEW OF FACULTY IN YEAR THREE OF THE
PROBATIONARY PERIOD

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
COMMUNICATION NO. 13

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I. OVERVIEW

When a faculty member reaches tenure code “3” in the probationary period, a formal review of the faculty member’s progress shall be undertaken. This is known as the “third-year review.” The third-year review follows the requirements of this communication and is made a part of the faculty member’s personnel file.

II. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Spring of Third Year	For tenure-track faculty in the third year of the probationary period (tenure code 3), written evaluation completed and shared with the faculty member.
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III. PURPOSE

The purpose of the third-year review is to provide an assessment of an individual’s professional development and his or her prospects for being recommended for indefinite tenure at the end of the probationary period. Please recall that a recommendation for indefinite tenure ultimately must be based upon an assessment: 1) that a candidate has made contributions of an appropriate magnitude and quality in research, teaching, and service, 2) that a candidate has demonstrated a high likelihood of sustaining contributions to the field and to the department, and 3) that granting indefinite tenure will be in the best interest of the University of Illinois. An eventual recommendation for granting indefinite tenure should describe clearly how the department will be strengthened by such a commitment and how the best interests of the university will be served. All reviews should be made with these points firmly in mind.

It is the responsibility of the department or equivalent academic unit to inform all faculty members of general campus and college criteria for advancement in rank. If a unit has adopted additional criteria, these should be also communicated to faculty members. In addition to information about criteria for advancement, faculty members should receive information about the process used for promotion and tenure reviews, including the separate reviews that take place at the department, college, and campus levels.

If a unit fails to conduct the third-year review it should not be construed as an indication of the faculty member’s performance nor does it create an entitlement to promotion or indefinite tenure.

The faculty member eligible for a third-year review is encouraged to consult with the unit executive officer concerning the process and outcome of the review.

IV. GUIDELINES

Each department may use its own procedures for third-year reviews, within the following general guidelines:

1. Each aspect of the individual's performance that will be gauged in the final tenure review must be evaluated, and the third-year evaluation should include an assessment of strengths and weaknesses within each category.
2. Third-year reviews often play a pivotal role in contested tenure cases. Unit executive officers typically experience tension between their role in helping a junior faculty member to develop his or her career and their role in providing an objective and candid assessment of progress, especially when it may fall short of expectations in one or more areas. Fairness to the candidate requires that the review be as candid as possible about shortcomings so the candidate has an opportunity to correct his or her course before an ultimate recommendation must be made. Strengths similarly should be stated. Expectations for the coming years should be clearly laid out in the written evaluation report.
3. Where advisable, departments may seek outside letters of evaluation and any other material that may be useful for the third-year review.
4. The Provost requires that the faculty member be informed in writing of the results of the third-year review, and that the results of the review be made a part of the faculty member's departmental personnel file.
5. Before the results of the third-year review are communicated to the faculty member, the draft communication must be reviewed and approved by the dean or equivalent administrative officer, and by other bodies as provided in the bylaws of the school or college.
6. Caution should be used in the write-up of the results of the review; no promise of tenure or estimates of the probability of tenure should be made. ***Both the department and the faculty member should be aware that the results of the third-year review do not determine future decisions on promotion and tenure.***