

**Department of Astronomy Plan of Organization
Bylaws 1A**

**Guidelines and Procedures for
Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure for Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty**

Approved October 8, 2018

I. Preamble

This document supplements the University of Maryland Policy on Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Faculty (approved by USM Chancellor, 26 March 1993, with subsequent revisions) and the CMNS Policy on Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure. It shall not supersede College or University policies in force at the time of any action described in this document.

This plan was circulated and then discussed in a meeting of the tenured and tenure-track faculty of the Department of Astronomy on May 15, 2017, with 12 of 14 members present. The Guidelines were discussed and modified during the meeting, with secret votes for each major proposed change. To accept the modified document in its entirety, 11 votes were received by secret ballot (one member was called away before the final vote), with 11 votes in favor of this plan, 0 opposed, and 0 abstaining. This vote is a positive vote as defined by the Department's Plan of Organization. The faculty agreed to a typographical correction at a meeting on October 8, 2017.

II. Terminology and reference documents

Faculty: When not otherwise specified, faculty in this document refers to members of the Tenured/Tenure-track (TTK) faculty appointed in the Department of Astronomy.

The First Level Review Committee: is the same as the faculty review committee required by Policy II-100(A), section III.D.2.

Reference documents are:

University Policy II-100(A) at

<https://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-ii-faculty>

University Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) procedures at:

<https://faculty.umd.edu/policies/documents/APTManual.pdf>

College Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) procedures at:

<https://cmns.umd.edu/faculty-staff/chairs-handbook/cmns-protocols-faculty-searches-appointments-promotions-and-reviews>

III. Faculty ranks of Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty covered by this document

Assistant Professor: Normal criteria for an initial appointment include a Ph.D. in Astronomy or Physics or a closely related field and publication in refereed journals of several research articles that have had an impact on the research of other scientists in the field. Most importantly, the individual must show the promise of becoming an outstanding researcher and educator, as well as promise for growth to satisfy the requirements for Associate Professor. A modest amount of service in support of departmental needs and the external professional community is expected. Appointment at this rank usually also requires congruence between the individual's area of anticipated future research and the Department's programmatic goals.

Associate Professor: Normal criteria include demonstrated excellence in research, as demonstrated by a firmly established reputation within the candidate's field at the national level together with recognition at the international level. An active publication history in highly-ranked journals, high citation rate, and success in obtaining external funding all contribute to such a record. Educational criteria include excellence in teaching and mentoring as demonstrated, for instance, by high ratings in course evaluations, by successful innovations in the teaching program, and by research students approaching or past completion of their theses. Normally there should be demonstrated excellence in teaching both at the graduate and at the undergraduate level. There should also have been significant service either to the University community or to the external professional community. Appointment to this rank may require congruence between the individual's anticipated area of future research and the Department's programmatic goals. Appointment to this rank confers tenure.

Professor: Normal criteria for appointment or promotion to this rank include an established international reputation for outstanding research, a record of distinguished teaching, and substantial service beyond and within the University. A person to be appointed as or promoted to Professor should have demonstrated qualities of leadership of research in the field and a record of research funding. Promotion to this rank is normally independent of the Department's programmatic goals, but new appointments at this rank may require congruence between an individual's anticipated area of future research and the Department's programmatic goals. This rank carries tenure.

IV. Elements in evaluating candidates for appointment and promotion

Essential criteria for appointment or promotion of professorial faculty fall into three general categories: (1) performance in teaching, advising, and mentoring of students; (2) performance in research, scholarship, creative and/or professional activity; (3) performance of professional

service within the university, the profession, or the community. For convenience, the following definitions are abstracted from University Policy II-100(A) in effect in 2017, along with additional considerations that the Department finds important:

1. The fundamental criterion in evaluating research is the impact of the individual's research on the field, i.e., on the importance of the research. This is assessed by a variety of criteria such as the quality of the individual's publications, publication journal reputation, citations to refereed publications, assessment of the impact of the individual's research by external experts in the field, assessment by collaborators of the individual's contributions to collaborative efforts, receipt of invitations to present invited reviews at national and international meetings, and ability to obtain external funding for the research. University policy states that "research of a classified or proprietary nature shall not be considered in weighing an individual's case for appointment or promotion."
2. The individual's teaching is assessed by means of a teaching portfolio. The teaching portfolio contents must comply with College and University requirements, and may include references to other materials submitted in conjunction with the assessment (e.g. APT package sections) to reduce redundancy. It typically includes course syllabi for courses taught since the previous evaluation. The portfolio must include summaries of University student course evaluations and peer teaching evaluations. It may additionally include other information that the candidate or Department feels would be helpful in evaluating educational activities, including input from graduate students, particularly including students advised by the individual, information on the quantity and quality of graduate students who have completed theses under the direction of the individual, and accounts of innovations introduced into the teaching program of the Department.
3. Service is evaluated by contributions to the University and the profession by activities within the University, to its community (the state and citizens of Maryland), and to the professional community both nationally and internationally. The university requires that "Service activity shall not be expected or required of junior faculty to the point that it interferes with the development of their teaching and research."

B. Procedures for periodic evaluation of tenured faculty

Periodic evaluation of tenured faculty members (University Policy II-1.20) shall take place at intervals or times established by the University or College. The Tenured/Tenure-Track Merit committee (Department of Astronomy Plan of Organization Bylaws 1B) shall conduct an appropriate evaluation of research, education, and service in conjunction with the annual review process, and will report their findings to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will be responsible for arranging evaluations required by the University or College. A faculty member may request an evaluation at the appropriate time in any year.

V. Departmental Procedures for Search, Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure

University policy emphasizes a fundamental principle that: “Search, appointment, and promotion procedures shall be fair, unbiased, and impartial, and comply with institutional policies that are widely publicized and published in the Faculty Handbook.” The following subsections indicate specific departmental procedures within that principle.

A. Search procedures

1. When a search is carried out for any of the tenure-track positions, the Department Chair will appoint a search committee consisting of at least three members of the Tenured/Tenure-Track department professorial faculty at or above the search rank. The Department Chair will not be on this search committee.
2. The Department Chair shall appoint a search committee Chair. In addition to being a voting member of the committee, the search Chair shall also be responsible for ensuring that the search and initial evaluation process reflects the University’s commitments to equity, inclusion, and fairness. Advertisements for the position shall be placed in the AAS Job Register at a minimum, and in other venues that may increase the chances that diverse candidates will be encouraged to apply. The committee Chair or designee shall also ensure that written evaluation material is collected, written, and distributed to the evaluators in a timely manner, typically at least one week in advance of discussions. The search committee shall carefully evaluate all applicants. After conducting the search, the search committee shall present the Department Chair with a slate of three or more candidates. The search committee Chair or designee will inform applicants who are no longer under consideration, in accord with University policy.
3. Candidates who are invited to visit the Department for further evaluation shall have the opportunity to talk with all Tenured/Tenure-Track members of the Department. The committee will ensure that students from the Department interact with the candidates and provide input to the First Level Review committee (sec. V.C).
4. In rare cases the Department Chair may bring a case of an applicant suitable for an expedited (target of opportunity) hire directly to the First Level Review committee. Unless the First Level Review committee agrees otherwise, the committee shall interact with the candidate as it would with any other candidate; that is, to have opportunities to review written materials, to attend a talk presented by the candidate, for individual interviews and discussions, to obtain feedback from student interviews with the candidate, and so on.
5. All candidates identified for further consideration shall be evaluated by a departmental First Level Review Committee.

B. Appointment and promotion procedures (First Level Review)

The Department Chair shall appoint a committee of at least two faculty members at or above the level of the proposed appointment to compile promotion materials required by the University, College, and Department for the First Level Review.

The First Level Review committee Chair shall assemble the material required (generally called the APT packet) by the University and Department as specified in Bylaws 1A and 1B of the Plan of Organization for the Department of Astronomy, then distribute this written evaluation material to the First Level Review Committee at least one week in advance of the First Level Review committee's meeting to consider the promotion. Supplemental materials (e.g. late evaluator letters) may be included for consideration by the review committee in cases approved by the Department Chair. The committee Chair presents the case and chairs the discussion and votes. Normally the committee Chair or another committee member will be the primary spokesperson for the First Level Review Committee.

The First Level Review committee consists of all active faculty members at or above the level considered for appointment or promotion, with the exception of the Department Chair, who must attend First Level Review meetings and has a voice but does not vote. Committee members who cannot come to campus and attend are strongly encouraged to participate in the meeting by phone or videoconference.

Individuals with Emerita or Emeritus professorial titles are entitled to voice but not vote. Faculty with joint appointments in another department or joint appointments on another campus of the UMD System will be entitled to both voice and vote, provided their appointment in astronomy is greater than 0.33 FTE. Other persons with professional stature at or above the appointment or promotion may occasionally be allowed to attend First Level Committee meetings with the permission of the Department Chair and First Level Review Chair.

C. First Level Review committee voting procedures

Voting procedures in appointment and promotion cases are slightly different. The main difference is that, given the department's size, candidates for promotion cases are generally well known to all of the faculty members, so absentee votes are allowed. Proxy voting is not allowed in any case.

1. Voting in appointment cases

At least 3/4 of members qualified to vote must be able to participate in the committee discussion, either in person or electronically, to establish quorum. All voting shall be by secret ballot, with no absentee voting allowed, and only vote totals will be reported. The usual goal of voting in appointment cases is to establish a ranked list of final candidates who are well-qualified for the position under consideration. Preliminary voting in the committee may be by plurality, by elimination, or by any other method that the review committee shall choose prior to commencement of voting in each instance. There shall be a final vote on the appointment of at least the top-ranked candidate, where a positive vote shall be more than 1/2 of the votes in favor of the appointment, and fewer

than 1/3 votes are opposed. If a ranked list has been made the committee may provide the Department Chair with instructions in the event the top-ranked candidate declines to be considered further. Such instructions may include majority agreement for the Chair to contact further members of the ranked list in the order of ranking, to suspend the search until the First Level Review committee can reconvene to again consider the candidates proposed for consideration by the Search committee, or other similar options that maintain the intent and integrity of the original search process.

2. Voting in promotion cases

At least 2/3 of members qualified to vote must be able to participate in the committee discussion, either in person or electronically, to establish quorum. All voting shall be by secret ballot, and only vote totals will be reported. Absentee ballots shall be solicited from eligible members unable to participate in the meeting due to travel or other absences. Absentee votes must be submitted no later than 5:00 PM department time on the day of the meeting to a member of the administrative staff designated by the Department Chair. Absentee ballots will be tabulated separately in the report submitted to the second level, with unsubmitted ballots reported as absences. The final vote for promotion and tenure will be considered positive if more than 1/2 of the total number of yes and no votes are in favor of the promotion and fewer than 1/3 of these votes are opposed.

D. Subsequent evaluation

As required by University procedures, the Department Chair will contribute a letter to the APT packet containing her or his evaluation and any other information that may be germane. This letter is not shared with the First Level Review committee. Second-level and subsequent reviews follow College and University procedures.

E. Lack of Limitations: Nothing in these guidelines is intended to limit the sources from which relevant information may be sought. In particular, the Chair of the unit, the promotion/search committee, or the first level review committee may seek input and advice from whatever sources it deems appropriate in addition to the required sources. Additional sources must assist in making fair, unbiased, and impartial decisions. The candidate may make requests to the Department Chair that specific individuals be excluded as evaluators, providing information that the Chair may consider in making a decision on the matter.

F. Confidentiality

All materials in the review process are strictly confidential and must be returned to the Department or destroyed following the First Level Review committee meeting. Similarly, all preliminary information (including the names of applicants), discussions, committee decisions, or other search- or promotion-related information are confidential and may not be revealed to anyone outside of the committee or Department, as appropriate, unless allowed by University policy or with Department Chair's permission.

V. Modification of departmental APT Guidelines and Procedures

According to University policy, the criteria described in this document should be reviewed periodically by the Department as deemed necessary, but no less frequently than once every five years. This review should include consideration of the unit's progress toward increasing the diversity of its tenured faculty. This document must be updated as necessary to comply with changes in University and College policies. These guidelines and procedures may be modified or amended as described in the Plan of Organization for the Department of Astronomy.