

# **Guidelines for Preparing Your P&CA Dossier**

Prepared by the Faculty Affairs Committee

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*By the LFA Mentoring Committee*

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I. TIME TABLE (More details in *Procedures on Promotion and Continued Appointment*)

First Year	
February (March in future)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library personnel advises faculty without continuing appointment of their status and notifies them of their scheduled reviews.</li> <li>Library personnel requests letters of intent for faculty applying for promotion.</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sitting members of U-P&amp;CA committee excused from service on L-P&amp;CA</li> <li>LFA president and library personnel officer determine list of faculty eligible to serve on L-P&amp;CA and U-P&amp;CA, when applicable. This list becomes the ballot for the May election</li> </ul>
April—last Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letters of intent due in library personnel</li> <li>Explanatory letters from faculty unable to serve on P&amp;CA committees because of extenuating circumstances must be received by LFA president</li> </ul>
May	L-P&CA committee elections—5 with the most votes Dossier preparation workshop (Mentoring, Outgoing P&CA committees)
June	Incoming and outgoing P&CA chairs determine calendar for upcoming fiscal year for University Libraries planning calendar
July—1 <sup>st</sup> Friday	Lists of External Reviewers and Professional References due
August 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	Elections for U-P&CA committee slots as needed
August 1st Friday	Electronically submit dossiers to Library personnel office (PDF file)
August-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dossier preparation for distribution</li> <li>P&amp;CA committee has initial meeting to establish criteria for review process, designation of duties to present candidates to the Committee of the Whole (COW), designate a recorder, designate meeting times, etc.</li> </ul>
September 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	References and external reviewers must have been selected
September	Letters of solicitation to references and external reviewers sent out as soon as possible after receipt.
October 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	Letters from references and external reviewers due
October	Deliberations on a candidate may begin as soon as dossier is completed with the letters from references and external reviewers
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>L-P&amp;CA Committee deliberates</li> <li>Library personnel assembles portions of the dossiers to be used by members of the COW</li> </ul>
November (end) or December (beginning)	Joint meetings of L-P&CA committee and COW
December	L-P&CA meets and writes letters of recommendation
January-February	Dean reviews recommendations, makes decision on each candidate, and discusses decisions with L-P&CA committee
Second Year	
January	Candidate meets with L-P&CA committee to discuss letters and recommendations
February-March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dean notifies each candidate of his/her decision and explains reasons</li> <li>Candidates wishing to appeal must submit it within 14 calendar days of receipt of decision</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library personnel officer assembles dossiers to be forwarded to Provost's office for review by U-P&amp;CA committee</li> </ul>
March-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidate meets with dean to discuss letters and recommendations</li> <li>U-P&amp;CA committee meets and makes recommendations to the provost</li> <li>Provost notifies candidate of the U-P&amp;CA decision</li> </ul>
June	Promotion and continued appointment decisions announced following the Board of Visitors meeting

## I. INTRODUCTION

This document presents guidelines for preparing dossiers and is intended for quick reference. It is no replacement for the *Procedures for Promotion and Continued Appointment*, which is the authoritative document. If there is doubt, always refer to the *Procedures*. Evaluation of candidates up for review focuses on three components: the job, professional engagement and university service. Refer to the *Procedures* for a full description of these components.

Professional engagement consists of research as evidenced by publications, presentations and professional contributions such as involvement in professional organizations, advisory boards and consultancies. Other demonstrations of professional engagement include but are not limited to receiving and administering grants, awards, scholarships, internships, etc.

Evaluation of research, scholarly and creative achievements measures dissemination of knowledge to the profession. (*Procedures* 3.2.1) That being said, it is impossible to prescribe an exact formula of requirements for all reviews for continued appointment because job descriptions and responsibilities of candidates vary widely.

## II. THE PROCESS

P&CA is a peer review process by which elected representatives of the library faculty review and evaluate the job performance, professional involvement and growth, and scholarly or creative activities of faculty colleagues who are eligible and applying for re-appointment, continued appointment, or promotion in rank.

The audiences to whom applicants address their dossiers include members of the Library P&CA Committee and the Dean of the University Libraries. If a candidate is requesting a promotion or continued appointment, the dossier also needs to address the interests and concerns of the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee for Extra-collegiate Faculty, which is chaired by the Provost.

During the P&CA Committee's and Committee of the Whole (COW) deliberations, each dossier undergoes a detailed analysis of the information presented using the criteria found in section 3 of the P&CA procedures. The discussions that take place in committee meetings center on how well the candidate has met the criteria for each job component, which governs the final decision. After the L-P&CA conducts its initial deliberations, there is a joint meeting of the L-P&CA Committee and the COW. The four elected members of the L-P&CA each get one vote and the collective vote of the COW counts as one vote so there is a total of five votes. The chair does not vote.

The letter of recommendation for candidates on the continued appointment track should speak to how the criteria have been met and cite areas that need improvement and how that improvement may be achieved. Decisions on reappointment and continued appointment are based primarily on job performance, whereas promotion decisions are based on progressively widening professional engagement activities.

Candidates may apply for promotion and either reappointment or continued appointment simultaneously. Each decision is made separately, but the candidate need only submit one dossier.

Evaluation of candidates is based primarily on the dossier of accomplishments submitted by each candidate. If a significant event takes place before the deliberations have concluded, the candidate may send a letter to the Committee's Chair explaining the event (e.g. a book or an article is published, a presentation is given, etc.). Although the final decision is made on the basis of information contained in the submitted dossier, additional qualifying or clarifying information is often provided for members of the Committee during the Committee's discussions.

### **III. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

The dossier must be prepared in accordance with the instructions provided in the *Procedures for Promotion and Continued Appointment (PP&CA)*. The dossier is the basis on which the evaluation and recommendation for or against re-appointment, continued appointment, or promotion is made. Candidates present their case to the L-P&CA Committee using only the dossier. The information in the dossier should clearly present a candidate's case.

Preparing a successful dossier takes a considerable amount of thought and preparation. From day one, applicants should start accumulating the information, documents, and data that are required for their dossiers. In other words, applicants should keep records on everything they do. This will help not only with the L-P&CA dossier but also with annual Faculty Activity Reports (FARs).

If you have not prepared a P&CA dossier before, seek the advice of a colleague who has continued appointment. Candidates are encouraged to ask colleagues with continued appointment to read their draft dossiers and offer suggestions for improvement. If you have prepared a dossier before, it is still a good idea to ask a colleague to critique the draft dossier. If an applicant has questions about how to organize the dossier, he/she should ask the Chair of the P&CA Committee, a member of the mentoring committee, or a colleague. P&CA workshops are provided by Mentoring Committee in May.

Each part of the dossier has a specified format, as outlined in the instructions below. Adherence to the specified format is not only an indication of how well a candidate can organize and present his/her case; it also enables Committee members to find quickly and easily the information they need for their assessment of the candidate's progress.

## IV. DOSSIER DOCUMENT FORMAT

### Submitting the Dossier

- Electronic format (PDF)
- Follow the prescribed order
- Supporting Documentation may be in hard copy.

### Text Formatting:

- Font type: either Arial or Verdana
- Minimum font size: 11 point
- Single-spaced paragraphs.
- Double-spaced between paragraphs.
- Margins of 1-inch left/right and top/bottom.
- Do not number pages
- Supplementary materials may be submitted as is in original format

## V. CONTENTS OF THE DOSSIER

The dossier must include the following materials and in this order (lengths for each section are specified):

**Cover Letter Addressed to the Chair of P&CA Committee** The letter of introduction to the P&CA committee is typed on University Libraries letterhead stationary and is addressed to the committee chair. The letter should be very concise and limited to 1 – 1½ pages in length. In the letter, the candidate states what he/she is a candidate for (e.g. *“Please consider my continued appointment to the faculty of the University Libraries.”* or *“Please consider my request for reappointment to the faculty of the University Libraries and promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor”*.) In the cover letter, briefly introduce yourself by stating your position and what you are applying for. Give a bulleted list of the dossier’s contents.

### **The Personal Statement**

The personal statement is taken very seriously at the University level, and it is important for you to allow adequate time for reflection and preparation of the personal statement. In the personal statement, give an outline of what you intend to accomplish at the university and provide a trajectory of your career up to the time of your employment to the present and into the future. Give a brief history of your career at Virginia Tech, highlight major dimensions of your achievements, and give a research agenda. If you can, tie your research interests, job responsibilities and university service together. Offer concrete examples of your work. Do not offer evaluative statements of your work,

avoid lists, and do not repeat information that is available elsewhere in the dossier (you may refer the reader to other parts of the dossier). Use the personal statement and summary of activities in tandem.

#### Format of Personal Statement

Allowed 3 pages

Preamble/Introduction—introduce how you became interested in what you do, librarianship in general

Job responsibilities—describe the kinds of work you do and how you do it

Professional Engagement

Research: explain general thrust of your research, its progress, and tie it to your job if possible

Publications

Presentations

Participation in professional organizations

University Service

Conclusion: explain why the university should invest in you

#### Summary of Activities

The Summary of Activities is based on the candidate's position description and describes their activities for each performance criterion listed in sections 3.1-3.3 of the *PP&CA*.

Candidates are advised to use previous Faculty Activity Reports (FARs) as the basis of the Summary. Each page must display, in the upper right-hand corner, the words, "Summary of Activities", and the candidate's last name (e.g. Summary of Activities, Smith).

#### Format of the Summary:

Include a brief introduction

Discuss professional responsibilities (as outlined in the current position description) and significant accomplishments. Emphasize the impact of your work.

Address professional engagement (research, scholarly, and creative achievements; professional contributions through associations and conferences), and university service

use bullets and sub-headers

Limit to 5 pages

Should not be a repeat of the personal statement or other parts of the dossier.

Should be able to stand alone as an independent document.

The Summary of Activities should enable members of the Library Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee and the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee for Extra-collegiate Faculty to clearly understand your professional work and achievements.

The Summary should provide all reviewers with a clear understanding of your achievements in the areas of professional responsibilities, professional engagement, and university service.

### **Curriculum Vitae (no restriction on page length)**

The *curriculum vitae* (CV) differs from a résumé in scope and in length. The CV generally does not have a required or recommended length, whereas the résumé is usually kept to no more than two pages in length. The CV is usually written for an academic audience and records achievements related to one's job within an academic context. The *Vita* lists the candidate's publications, presentations, and classes he/she taught, while the résumé does not generally include such information.

For the P&CA dossier, the CV is typed on University Libraries letterhead stationary for the first page and must list the information in the order given below. *Categories for which the candidate has nothing to report should be omitted from the CV.* Each page must display, in the upper right-hand corner, the words, "Curriculum Vitae", and the candidate's last name (e.g. Curriculum Vitae, Smith).

### **UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES CURRICULUM VITAE OUTLINE**

NOTE: Within each section of the CV, list activities in reverse chronological order.

#### **Name**

#### **Home Address**

#### **Education**

List all of the post-secondary academic degrees you have earned (noting honors). Indicate your major, degree, and the date each degree was awarded for each school attended. Also list any degrees in progress and include an expected graduation date.

Record of study: for significant post graduate education not resulting in a degree, certifications, etc.

#### **Scholarships and Fellowships**

List any scholarships or fellowships that you have received that pertain to your position:

title of scholarship or fellowship

date awarded

brief description

#### **Employment History**

inclusive dates

title/rank

name of the institution

institution's address



This is a list, use activity summary or personal statement to describe your accomplishments.

### **Honors, Awards and Grants**

title

date awarded

brief description

### **Professional Contributions**

#### **Membership in Professional Organizations**

This is a list. Activity within organization is described in the Participation in Professional Organization section below. Provide inclusive dates of membership. List in the following order:

international organizations

national organizations

regional organizations

state organizations

local organizations

May NOT include LFA membership

### **Participation in Professional Organizations**

Provide inclusive dates of membership and activity. This section may include memberships in:

international organizations

national organizations

regional organizations

state organizations

local organizations

Consultant services outside University

Curatorial services outside University

Include in this section, under each organization, a list of any offices held, committee appointments, etc. It should not include conference attendance only (unless there was participation). Conference that the candidate attended without formal participation may be mentioned in the Summary of Activities. Participation such as conference presenter, discussant, keynote or plenary speaker, may be listed here.

### **Research, Scholarly and Creative Achievements**

#### **Presentations**

Give a full citation of presentation, what, where, organization and date. List multiple instances of the same presentation under a single entry. List only those presentations that have already occurred in the CV. List only those presentations already given.

## **Publications**

List only those publications that have been accepted for publication, or have already appeared. Work in progress or under review should not be included in the publications list but may be mentioned in the summary of activities. The university guidelines give a detailed list of the types of publications to include. Develop an organizational scheme for the list of publications you have. Give complete bibliographic citations. Add brief descriptions that enhance your case. Use consistent style for citations.

### **Tips for Listing Publications**

Indicate lead author in bold

Journal where article appeared—identify refereed journals or peer reviewed articles; identify major journals in discipline.

Type of publication (e.g. article, book, etc.)

Be able to produce copies of publications

Volume, issue

Date

Explain relationships among various publications, exhibitions and performances where redundancy or duplication appears to occur. Multiple listings of the same paper should appear under a single entry.

After each citation, candidates may include brief descriptions of journals or series in which they have published, in order to explain the scope and authority of the publication.

## **University Service Activities**

- Provide inclusive dates. Brief descriptions may be included.  
List in the following order:
- University governance activities and academic committees, such as library service, (including LFA) search committees, interdepartmental committees meetings, panels, workshops, etc. - led or organized within university,  
Consultant services and curatorial services (outside main job duties) within university
- LFA participation

## **Job Description(s) (no restriction on page length)**

For promotion or continued appointment, only include a current job description. Copies of earlier position descriptions should be included in the supporting documentation if there have been any significant changes in assigned responsibilities during the time period covered by the summary.

For reappointment, include all job descriptions from the time of initial appointment

## **L-P&CA Committee Letters of Recommendation**

Reappointment and Continued Appointment: include letters of recommendation from previous reviews. For promotion from instructor to assistant include all L-P&CA recommendation letters. For promotion after receiving continued appointment: previous L-P&CA letters are not necessary.

### **References (no restriction on page length)**

References know your work and may have worked directly with you

#### **Number and Type:**

*For reappointment (See Section 4 PP&CA):* Minimum of **three (3) references** required:

One must be the current supervisor. If the candidate has two current supervisors, both must be listed. If the candidate's current supervisor is the Dean of Libraries, the candidate should select a former supervisor or another appropriate person.

At least one other reference must be from a member of the university faculty.

Other reference(s) should be familiar with the candidate's work or professional activities.

*For continued appointment (See Section 5 of PP&CA):* Minimum of **four (4) references** required:

One must be the current supervisor. If the candidate has two current supervisors, both must be listed. If the candidate's current supervisor is the Dean of Libraries, the candidate should select a former supervisor or another appropriate person.

At least one other reference must be from a person outside Virginia Tech.

Other reference(s) should be familiar with the candidate's work or professional activities.

*For promotion (See Section 6 of PP&CA):* Minimum of **four (4) references** required:

One must be the current supervisor. If the candidate has two current supervisors, both must be listed. If the candidate's current supervisor is the Dean of Libraries, the candidate should select a former supervisor or another appropriate person.

At least one reference must be from a person outside the University Libraries.

For promotion to the rank of associate professor or full professor, at least one must be from a person outside of Virginia Tech.

Other reference(s) should be familiar with the candidate's work or professional activities.

#### **Listing References:**

List references on a separate page.

Include for each reference:

- full name of the reference
- His or her job title

- complete mailing address
- telephone number
- e-mail address
- fax number (if available)
- Brief description of what qualifies the reference to speak about your work or activities.

**Some considerations when selecting references:**

- Consider the person's ability to comment on and evaluate your professional work and accomplishments.
- Candidates should communicate with references about what he/she would like them to emphasize in the reference letter.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to share their dossier (or at least the CV) with their references, in order to help them write a letter that addresses key points in the candidate's dossier. Candidates are also advised to share the P&CA Policies and Procedures document with prospective references.
- In most cases, the minimum number of references required (as required by the *PP&CA*) is sufficient. A few well-chosen references will enhance a dossier far more than a lengthy list that includes many references of marginal value. The Committee will inform the candidate if more references are needed, and why.
- All letters of reference must be made in writing and in response to the P&CA Committee's request.

**External Reviewers**

- May know of you, but should not have worked directly with you. The purpose is to provide an independent impartial review.
- Required for Continuing Appointment and promotion above Assistant Professor
- Candidate nominates 3 people and/or institutions with comparable positions
- P&CA Committee nominates 5
- Candidate gives brief justification of selection, such as breadth and depth of experience, level of professional contributions and documented expertise.
- One reviewer from the candidate and two reviewers from the committee will be solicited for conducting a review by way of random selection.
- External review letters and names of reviewers not shared with candidate

**Supporting Documentation (Appendices)**

Supporting documentation is optional. Include only that which will enhance your case.

Here are some examples of the types of material that may be included as supporting documentation:

copies of publications

copies of in-house publications

teaching evaluations

letters of appreciation and/or thanks

examples of instructional material

statistical reports

copies of past evaluations (that were signed by candidate's supervisor(s))

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*The Mentoring Committee has primary responsibility for this document. In conjunction with the Faculty Affairs Committee and the outgoing L-P&CA Committee, an annual review of this document will take place to ensure consistency with the P&CA procedures and with university policy. All updates must be finalized and made available to faculty prior to the first workshop held for candidates on dossier preparation as part of the upcoming review cycle.*