



## First-Year Tenure-Track Faculty Peer Review

University of South Carolina Lancaster

### Purpose

As stated in the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Manual, the University of South Carolina is committed to annual review of all faculty. First-year review is a specialized form of annual peer review applicable to faculty in the first year of their tenure-track appointments. Administrators with faculty rank are urged to undergo first-year tenure-track faculty peer review in the first year of appointment, particularly if the administrator plans to pursue promotions and/or tenure in the future.

This evaluation is designed to introduce the faculty member to the basic procedures of the tenure and promotion process at the University of South Carolina Lancaster. In addition, the review will give faculty members constructive feedback on their initial performance in rank in terms of tenure and promotion criteria, specifically teaching, scholarship, and service.

### Recommendations & Special Considerations for First-Year Review

The USCL Tenure and Promotion Committee will evaluate the first-year review file, as will the faculty member's division chair, and the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs. A person undergoing first-year review is exempt from Annual Faculty Peer Review but may request that the first-year review file be sent to a higher level for an informal review.

Typically, the faculty member submitting a first-year review file has only been on campus for one semester. As a result, the file may be not only a description of work performed thus far, but also the strategy for future development. Ideally the file will include a plan for scholarly research, if not actual research conducted during that time period.

The faculty member should in this first year develop an appropriate mechanism for recording and documenting professional activities, which will facilitate the preparation of the files for third-year review and application for tenure and/or promotion. The faculty member should refer to the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Manual for a listing of appropriate documentation, and should be aware that documentation is more than simply listing but includes preservation and presentation of evidence. At this early stage in the faculty member's professional career, the most useful forms of evidence should include classroom peer visitations and a scholarship strategy.

First-year faculty are urged to work closely on this review procedure with a mentor. The new faculty member may request the Associate Dean recommend a mentor.

## Preparation of the File

Annually each faculty member shall complete a Faculty Information Form (FIF) detailing the faculty member's professional activities conducted during the previous calendar year. First-year review also uses the format of the FIF, which is arranged according to the criteria for tenure and promotion found in the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Manual. The faculty member is encouraged to consult the Manual closely in the preparation of the FIF. The criteria stated in the Manual recognize three broad areas: Effectiveness as a Teacher and/or Librarian, Scholarship, Service. In documenting effectiveness for these criteria, the faculty member should focus specifically on his or her contributions to the mission of USC Lancaster in the performance of each of these areas.

For a description of the criteria for each of these areas, please refer to the most recent edition of the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Manual. It is important that the faculty member include activities in each of the three areas of the FIF, and the faculty member is encouraged to present limited narrative providing context and explaining the importance of the most significant activities included in the file. Faculty members should note that within the category of service, USC Lancaster sets a high priority on service to the community.

## Procedures and Deadlines

First-year faculty review shall be conducted according to the following schedule (the first date is the deadline for first-semester appointments, and the second is for second-semester appointments).

### **January 15/May 25**

The faculty member shall have submitted a completed first-year review file to the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The Associate Dean will retain one copy of the file for reference, forward one copy to the faculty member's division chair, and forward six copies of the file to the Tenure and Promotion Committee (hereafter referred to as "the committee").<sup>1</sup>

### **February 7/June 10**

The division chair will return the file to the Associate Dean, including a letter regarding his or her recommendation. The committee also will review the file and submit its recommendations to the Associate Dean.

<sup>1</sup> For second semester appointments, the tenure and promotion committee serving during the academic year of the new faculty member's hiring will review the file.

**February 21/June 22**

The Associate Dean will review the file and submit a recommendation to the Dean of the University for whatever action is appropriate.

**March 1/July 1**

If during the first year of an appointment not expressly temporary in nature, it is deemed in the best interest of the University to terminate the appointment at the end of the first year, notice of such termination will be given in writing by March 1 for first-semester appointments and July 1 for second-semester appointments.

**April 30/July 30**

By this date, the new faculty member will have received from the committee a written evaluation on the Peer Review Form (PRF). Each faculty member must sign his or her PRF acknowledging that the evaluation has been completed. This signature does not necessarily constitute agreement with the evaluation, and every faculty member has the right to respond to the annual peer evaluation in writing. The original of the signed PRF shall be given to the faculty member, and a copy shall be given to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who will maintain the copy as a part of the faculty member's personnel file.

**May 31/August 30**

By this date, any faculty member who wishes to respond to the annual peer evaluation in writing must have submitted the response to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Any written response from a faculty member to the PRF must be attached to the copy maintained in the office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

## **Committee Procedures**

First-Year Tenure-Track Faculty Peer Review will be conducted each year by the USCL Tenure and Promotion/Peer Review Committee. Evaluation of the faculty member will be based on the FIF submitted by that faculty member, and the evaluation will proceed in the following manner.

1. After review of the FIF, each member of the committees will evaluate the performance of each faculty member, producing brief comments for each of the areas of the criteria.
2. The appropriate review committee will meet and discuss each of the areas, determining an overall ranking for the faculty member in each area as Effective or Not Effective, as well as an overall ranking for each faculty member. If the committee cannot determine a ranking by consensus, the committee will conduct a vote with a tie resulting in a ranking of Effective. The committee should also at this time discuss and justify individual narrative comments and edit those comments for clarity as the committee deems

necessary. It is desirable that the committee reach consensus in the preparation of the narrative comments, but when necessary, dissenting comments shall be included.

3. The Chair of each committee will collate the comments for each faculty member being evaluated and include these comments in the narrative section of the PRF.
4. Each member of the appropriate review committee must sign the PRF. These signatures do not necessarily indicate that all members of the committee agree with all comments on the form or the overall ratings, but rather indicate that the committee members have reviewed the PRF and that their comments and ratings have been included in the process.
5. Members of the committees may not participate in their own peer evaluations, and as such, members of the committees will not sign their own PRF's, except to acknowledge their receipt of the finished form at the completion of peer review.