

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Distinguished Professors Review Subcommittee

FROM: John A. Pelesko, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Guidelines for Promotion to Distinguished Professor

DATE: June 3, 2025

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***Note: All Promotion and tenure materials must be submitted via the Google Shared Drive folder created by the Office of the Provost. Sarah Pisano, Administrative Specialist for the Office of the Provost ([sarah.pisano@njit.edu](mailto:sarah.pisano@njit.edu)), will be the liaison for the Promotion and Tenure process.***

Promotion decisions are critically important to the long-term future of the faculty member and the university. Promotion is dependent on past performance. The Distinguished Professor Review Subcommittee conducts a rigorous review, ensuring that the criteria for promotion are consistently applied across the university, and focusing its review and recommendation on the individual accomplishments of each faculty member being considered. The Subcommittee need not address questions of staffing, instructional and departmental needs, or mission, as these factors are considered by the senior administration (President, Provost and Deans) before final decisions are made.

In order to facilitate the Subcommittee's considerations, it is imperative that the documentation submitted by the academic unit or the nominee themselves to the Subcommittee be timely, complete, and clearly presented. A complete curriculum vitae documenting publications and patent applications since appointment or last promotion, teaching performance, scholarship, research, and professional/community service must be included, and submitted in **PDF format**. *Dossiers will be transmitted through the review process via the Google Shared Drive managed by the Office of the Provost.*

In order to determine accurately the significance of the published scholarly work of individuals considered for promotion, each publication reference should be annotated to include a description of the review process as obtained from the publisher. Specifically, it is important that the Subcommittee be provided with information that establishes whether the technical review process involved only the editor or included peer review, and whether journals of importance in the appropriate fields of specialization are represented among the published work of the candidate.

The Subcommittee also considers documentation such as citation data for the candidate's work, awards in competitions, and the funding of the work by outside agencies, because each recognizes the importance of the work in the discipline and each represents peer review by experts in the disciplinary field. In many disciplines, the Citation Index contains a listing by author of publications cited in bibliographies and footnotes by other scholars. Awards in peer-reviewed exhibits or competitions demonstrate the importance of the work within the field; peer-reviewed grant and contract awards or commissions are a valuable source of support for graduate students. Applications for, and granting of, patents and copyrights are recognized as a measure of importance and/or peer evaluation of the work in the field.

To promote consistency in assessment by the Subcommittee, an independent citation report for those coming up for promotion will be provided through our University Library; the Office of Research will prepare the research funding history for each candidate, and this history will identify individual responsibilities as PI or as co-PI; the Office of Graduate Studies will verify that the candidate performed the role of advisor or thesis committee member for any students listed on the candidate's CV; and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will also submit a report on the candidate's teaching evaluations. These reports will be made available to the candidate and academic unit P&T committees to establish mutual concurrence of the record.

Documentation of success in creating an innovative, diversity-friendly and student-centered learning environment should include summaries of classroom evaluations by students and peers over the last several years, descriptions of new courses and activities developed, course or laboratory notes and/or manuals prepared, teaching related publications, and other pertinent material reflecting a commitment to diversity and innovation in education. The documentation should also include a listing of undergraduate and student supervision and post-doctoral positions under the direction of the candidate. As available, identification of post-degree career positions of MS and PhD students can be an important indication of the value of the graduate experience offered by the candidate.

Similarly, complete documentation of the candidate's service role to the department (and federated departments, when applicable), the university, the community, and his/her profession should be included. Departmental service is required of everyone, since faculty committees are essential to the operation of the university. A faculty member who provides significant levels of departmental administration should not, however, expect such service to substitute for other kinds of faculty accomplishments.

Letters of reference are of high importance for promotion consideration, and the choice of references must be done in accordance with best practice and established norms. Letters should be solicited from those who can comment expertly on the candidate's teaching, service, and scholarly activities. The role of the Distinguished Professor Review

Subcommittee includes the responsibility of reviewing the lists of proposed external reviewers to ensure that we maintain the highest standards in the solicitation of these letters, including reviewing for any conflicts of interest. For more detailed guidance on conflict of interest, please refer to the National Science Foundation's [policy on conflict of interest](#).

Reference letters must be solicited for nominees for promotion to Distinguished Professor that are recommended by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of the senior members of the P&T committee eligible to vote for promotion to Full Professor of their department. The DPRS reviews each nomination, if the DPRS concludes that the candidate does not meet the criteria for promotion, the case is not considered further by the subcommittee.

For candidates not considered by their academic units, candidates (or nominators) provide dossiers including a nomination letter (explaining their professional accomplishments), CV in the required format, and a list of six external reviewers. Reviewers with potentially disqualifying conflicts of interest shall not be included. Again, the DPRS reviews each nomination, if the DPRS concludes that the candidate does not meet the criteria for promotion, the case is not considered further by the subcommittee. If the DPRS concludes the candidate should be considered for promotion, a list of six additional external reviewers should be produced by the DPRS. If the DPRS decides that they are not qualified to produce such a list, it is provided by the Dean of the corresponding college. After a complete list of 12 names is produced, the reference letters will be solicited.

After the external letters are received, all active cases are treated identically. The cases are discussed in random order. If a DP subcommittee member is from the same department as the candidate, the member speaks last. The DPRS vote is conducted by secret ballots, and cases receiving a majority of "Yes" votes are recommended for promotion to Distinguished Professor.

Documentation regarding promotion to Distinguished Professor will be due to the Office of the Provost by November 17, 2025. All personnel actions involving promotion must be presented to the Board of Trustees no later than at its June 2026 meeting. Hence, I ask that the Subcommittee make its recommendations and send them to me prior to May 1, 2026.

The remainder of this memorandum is devoted to an elaboration of the criteria for promotion to Distinguished Professor.

The Faculty Handbook (Section 2.3.1.4) states that at a minimum, the rank of Distinguished Professor is "intended for individuals whose accomplishments significantly exceed those of Professors, and include a sustained record of nationally and internationally recognized preeminence in their field(s) of expertise". This rank is a special recognition

conferred upon those faculty members whose exceptional academic, professional, and scholarly achievements have earned them recognition among their peers as international leaders in their respective fields.

Recognition among peers is evidenced (especially since promotion to professor at NJIT) by such indicators as:

- a sustained record of publication in one's scholarly field(s), including significant numbers of articles published in the most prestigious journals in one's field, and/or books and book chapters published by premier academic or scholarly publishers;
- citations of such publications, taking into account the number of article citations recorded in the NJIT Library's citation search, the h-index, and the numbers and the nature of citations in books in one's field; (self-citations will be examined)
- honors and awards for such publications, such as book awards and article prizes;
- reviews of such publications, taking into account not only what the reviews say but also the number of reviews, the reputations of the reviewers, and the status of the journals where the reviews appear;
- a record of sustained research funding and grants, and/or prestigious, highly competitive fellowships;
- for departments with graduate programs, a record of sustained advisement of doctoral students and graduate students as primary advisor;
- a distinguished record of speaking engagements and/or performances, including invited lectures, plenary lectures, and similar performances that indicate a distinguished national and international reputation among one's peers;
- the award of a significant prize or medal from a national or international professional organization, membership in a national academy, or election to the grade of Fellow of a major professional society;
- a sustained record of nationally and internationally recognized teaching excellence. This can be demonstrated by awards for teaching given by departments, colleges/schools, the university, alumni, and professional societies, recognizing activities such as outstanding and innovative classroom instruction, service as a student advisor and mentor, development of new courses and programs, writing textbooks that are widely adopted, and similar activities related to undergraduate or graduate education.

Variations in the above indicators may exist in specific non-STEM disciplines. For example, 'performance' may augment or sometimes replace 'publication' for faculty in fields like theater and architectural practice. However, the total record, especially since promotion to professor, must contain convincing evidence of a candidate's national and international reputation in his/her discipline, beyond what is normally expected at the rank of full professor.

Exceptions to university policies will be made only for good cause.



I urge you to exercise great care in your promotion recommendations. Thank you for your participation in this important work.

Materials and forms pertaining to promotion for academic year 2025-2026 can be accessed on the [promotion and tenure](#) page of the [Provost's website](#).