

# **UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**

## **DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook is intended to supplement other University and Department handbooks by providing an overview of the principal practices and policies associated with the routine operation of the philosophy department. The Faculty handbook and the Chair's handbook are available through the Faculty of Arts and Sciences website. Information about the department's graduate program is contained in the Graduate Student Handbook.

#### **MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT**

For the purpose of these by-laws a *department member* is a person with a tenured or tenure-stream appointment in the Department of Philosophy or a person with a regular non-tenure stream appointment in the Department of Philosophy. Secondary, affiliate and adjunct membership in the department is discussed in appendix D.

*Amended 28 January 2014*

#### **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee is constituted by the primary, tenured members of the department together with the chairperson of the department of the History and Philosophy of Science. It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to decide whether to recommend junior tenure stream members of the department for promotion to tenure. The rights and responsibilities of the Executive Committee as they relate to external appointments at the junior and senior level are set out in appendices A and B respectively.

#### **DEPARTMENT MEETINGS**

All members of the department may vote at department meetings. Voting by absentee ballot (usually about appointments) is permitted. A department member who is unable to attend a meeting may arrange to have his or her views presented by communicating them in advance to the chair of the meeting. (N.B. the chair of department meeting is usually, but not always, the departmental chair; graduate student evaluation meetings are, for example, chaired by the DGS.) Some meetings are attended by graduate student representatives, who, however, are not permitted to vote.

The Assistant Chair will take minutes of the department meetings and will make them available to all faculty.

It is the practice of the department not to decide any matter of importance at a meeting from which more than a very small number of members--who are not on leave or otherwise excused from attending meetings--are absent without having arranged for their views to be presented or their votes recorded. Matters of importance include appointments and changes to the department's constitution.

*Amended 12 December 2014*

## **SCHEDULE OF DEPARTMENT MEETINGS**

The department meets on the following occasions during the academic year.

To evaluate graduate students (early in the first and second terms, usually September and February).

To review the recommendations of the junior search committee in years in which there is a junior search, usually in January.

To decide whether to recommend a candidate or candidate for a junior position after the campus visits of the candidates.

To review the recommendations of the graduate admissions committee, early in the second term (usually February).

To decide what recruitment request, if any, to submit to the Dean for the following academic year, usually in April.

Other meetings are scheduled as needed, most of them to consider the recommendations of senior search committees.

## **CHAIR**

Each year, at the end of the spring term, the Chair writes a number of reports at the request of the Dean of Arts and Sciences. The chair also writes letters to each member of the department's faculty (not at distinguished professorial rank) evaluating his or her performance during the previous year. Some of the chair's other responsibilities are set out in appendices C (promotion and junior faculty mentoring, on which see also the [Chair's handbook, Section V.A](#) ), E (the evaluation of teaching) and F (visiting scholars).

## **NEW CHAIR SEARCH PROCEDURE**

While the search for a new department chair remains entirely under the purview of the Dean of Arts & Sciences, the Dean has in past years asked for recommendations from the department.

When such request is made, the department elects a committee of at least three members to canvass the department for possible candidates. After due consultation with faculty, students, and staff, the committee then presents its recommendations first to the department for a vote and then, with their authorization, to the Dean.

Normally the search procedures should begin in the late fall before the chair's next certification, but it may occur at other times if the Dean so requests

Normally a chair's term in office is four years.

*Revised & Approved 13 April 2011*

## **DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

*Advising.* The DGS oversees the department's graduate program, which is described in the Graduate Student Handbook, and is chair of the graduate committee. The DGS acts as advisor to each graduate student until he or she has formed a dissertation committee, at which time the student's dissertation supervisor becomes his or her advisor. The DGS meets at least once a term with each student not yet at the dissertation stage to discuss the student's progress, his or her selection of courses and to sign the student's course registration form. Graduate students are also assigned a faculty advisor (see Graduate Student Handbook 1.1).

*Annual Review.* Each semester, the DGS chairs a faculty meeting in which faculty review the performance of each graduate student not yet admitted to degree candidacy, assessing his or her work in the current year and his or her overall progress in the program. On the basis of the discussions in that meeting, the DGS prepares letters of evaluation for each graduate student.

## **DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES**

The Director of Undergraduate Studies, a responsibility which has for some years been discharged by the assistant chair, advises all undergraduate Philosophy majors. The DUGS usually meets with students once or twice a year to sign their registration slips, and to review their progress towards their degree.

## **DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE ADMISSIONS**

The director of graduate admissions chairs the admissions committee and supervises the department's admissions process. The director of graduate admissions presents the committee's recommendations at a meeting of the whole department held in January, secures the required permissions from the dean and sends letters of admission to admitted students. The director of graduate admissions is also responsible for arranging visits by prospective graduate students, fielding questions from applicants and prospective students and prepare a report summarizing the year's admissions for the faculty of the department.

## **DIRECTOR OF PLACEMENT**

The department's placement policy is described in some detail in the [Graduate Student Handbook](#), Section 6. It is the responsibility of the director of placement to oversee the placement policy. In particular, the director of placement, in conjunction with the student's dissertation director, should assist the completing student in all phases of preparation for the job market. This assistance should include:

- tracking suitable job openings;
- preparation of cover letter for distribution with the dossier
- collecting of supporting letters from faculty
- review of dossier materials, especially the CV;
- organization and running of mock job interviews;
- organization and running of mock job talks.

## **JUNIOR FACULTY APPOINTMENTS**

The departmental policy governing Junior Faculty Appointments is set out in Appendix A.

## **SENIOR FACULTY APPOINTMENTS**

The departmental policy governing Senior Faculty Appointments is set out in Appendix B.

## **HPS INVOLVEMENT IN PHILOSOPHY PERSONNEL DECISIONS:**

For all appointments in the area of Philosophy of Science, junior as well as senior, the Chair of HPS (or a representative designated by the Chair) will be invited to be an ex officio (i.e., non-voting) member of the search and other decision-making committees. The invited member will be expected to relay the views of HPS about matters relating to the appointment.

*Amended 10 February 2012*

## **PROMOTION, REAPPOINTMENT & TENURE**

The procedures, standards and criteria concerning recommendations regarding reappointment, promotions and tenure are set out in appendix C.

## **JOINT DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP**

The rights and responsibility of secondary members, affiliated faculty and adjunct members is set out in Appendix D.

## **GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE COURSES**

Decisions about course offerings and the staffing of courses are made by the chair with the aid of the assistant chair, who consults with faculty members in order to determine their preferences, which it is the policy of the department to accommodate to the extent possible. Proposals for new courses should be submitted through the assistant chair.

## **SUPERVISION AND OBSERVATION OF TEACHING**

The department's policy regarding the evaluation of teaching is set out in Appendix E.

## **PLANNING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE**

The department maintains a Planning and Budget Committee, which consists of the Chair, the Assistant Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Administrative Assistant, and the President of the graduate student body.

*Amended 17 October 2014*

## **VISITING SCHOLARS**

Every year the department hosts a number of visiting scholars, who receive library and computer privileges and the right to participate (with the instructor's permission) in graduate seminars. Eligibility conditions and other matters relating to visiting scholars are set out in Appendix F.

## **DEPARTMENTAL COLLOQUIUM SERIES**

The department hosts a series of talks by visiting speakers. The speakers are chosen, and the series is run by, the joint faculty student talks committee, whose responsibility it is to solicit suggestions for possible speakers from graduates students and members of the faculty.

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS**

The by-laws may be amended by majority vote at department meetings.

**Policy on Junior Faculty Appointments**

(A) The appointment of Instructors and Assistant Professors from outside the University will be decided by a vote of all regular tenure-stream faculty and regular non-tenure-stream faculty. Before participating in appointment decisions, nontenured members of the faculty will be asked by the Chairman to sign an undertaking of confidentiality as a necessary condition for participating. (Executive Committee members are likewise required to sign such an undertaking.) The Executive Committee retains full authority to amend this decision and retains full authority to make other personnel decisions and determine the procedures for making personnel decisions.

(B) Graduate students will not have a vote in matters of appointment, however they will be invited to provide faculty with their views and assessments. The Executive Committee suggests the following process: The two student members of the Junior Faculty Search Committee will attend the talks given in Pittsburgh by candidates for junior positions, and then will attend a meeting of the graduate students assembled to exchange views about the various candidates. Informed in these ways, in addition to their experience on the Search Committee, the two students will attend the Department meeting at which a decision will be made. They will participate in the discussion until they have (a) made clear their own opinions who, if anyone, should be appointed, (b) made clear the views of the graduate student body so far as they know these views, and (c) responded to whatever questions faculty may have for them. They will then be excused.

This policy was adopted by Executive Committee on 14 December 1987 and was slightly amended on 28 January 2014.

**Executive Committee policy concerning the involvement of untenured Department members in senior appointments**

The Executive Committee will normally invite the untenured tenure-stream faculty as well as regular non-tenure-stream faculty to participate in deliberations relating to appointments with tenure, subject to the following limitations:

- i. Untenured members are under no obligation to participate.
- ii. The Executive Committee retains full authority to withhold or to withdraw this invitation in cases where it deems it appropriate to do so. While a decision to exercise this authority may be made at any time, normally it is to occur at or shortly prior to the beginning of the senior recruitment season, when the Executive Committee meets to discuss the upcoming search.

Where the deliberations lead to agreement, or at least to an approximation to consensus, in favor of a tenured appointment, the Chair will make a recommendation to the Dean on behalf of the Department, supported by the signed ballots of the tenured members participating in the deliberation.

*Adopted 17 November 2003; amended 28 January 2014*

## **PROCEDURES, STANDARDS, AND CRITERIA CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING REAPPOINTMENT, PROMOTIONS, AND TENURE**

***Procedures:*** Each faculty member shall be advised by the Chairperson well in advance, usually at least six months in advance, when a RPT (Reappointment, Promotion, or Tenure) recommendation will be made to the Dean of Arts & Sciences by the Executive Committee in his/her case and shall be kept generally acquainted with the criteria, procedures, and standards governing RPT. The individual shall be asked to make available to the Department all his/her publications, to submit work in progress that the individual wants to have considered, and to submit any other material he/she believes would be helpful in his/her case. This material shall be widely circulated in the Department: members of the Executive Committee are expected to make an especial effort to become acquainted with it. Such evidence of teaching ability as student ratings of the candidate's courses shall also be circulated and considered. The members of the Executive Committee and the Chairperson are free to solicit whatever additional information from whatever sources they deem useful. For example, outside opinions are normally solicited in confidence by letter or by telephone or in person. Several weeks in advance of the Executive Committee's meeting to decide its RPT recommendation, the Chairperson shall notify all the junior members (instructors and assistant professors) of the Department that the RPT meeting has been scheduled and shall ask each junior faculty member to meet privately with the Chairperson to register his/her confidential opinion of the candidate's suitability for RPT, in particular his/her position of the candidate's merits with respect to the criteria set forth below. The Chairperson shall take notes in these private meetings which will be read to the Executive Committee at the RPT meeting. Every effort shall be made to schedule the RPT meeting so that as many members of the Executive Committee as possible (including, whenever possible, those on leave) can be present. Committee members absent on leave and not attending the meeting may register a vote by telephone, mail, message, or proxy if they wish (in which case they must be available for consultation by telephone at the time announced for the meeting); or they may decline to vote. In either event the Chairperson shall obtain absent members' views and report them fully at the meeting. A two-thirds majority of those voting is required for a positive recommendation concerning RPT. All those not absent on leave shall be counted as voting, except where for cause, and with the agreement of a majority of the Committee members present, a member requests not to be so counted. As soon as practicable, the Chairperson shall inform the individual of the recommendation made by the Executive Committee. If the recommendation is negative, the Chairperson shall inform the faculty member of the reasons that contributed to the negative recommendation. The faculty member may also request in writing that the Executive Committee reconsider its recommendation, indicating the reasons the faculty member believes warrant such reconsideration. If such a request is made, the Chairperson shall



communicate it to the Executive Committee which shall decide by simple majority vote of the full Committee whether or not to meet to reconsider its decision.

When transmitting the recommendation of the Executive Committee to the Dean of Arts & Sciences, the Chairperson is required by the Dean to indicate whether or not the Chairperson concurs with the decision of the Executive Committee. If the Chairperson does not concur with the decision of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson shall so inform both the individual and the Executive Committee. (Faculty members are reminded that the power of appointment does not reside in the Department but in the Board of Trustees which delegates that power to the Chancellor. RPT recommendations are subject to review by the Dean of Arts & Sciences, the Provost, and the Chancellor, any of whom may disagree with the recommendation of the Executive Committee.) If the Executive Committee makes a positive recommendation regarding promotion to Associate Professor or tenure, confidential external letters of recommendation, solicited by the Chairperson, will be transmitted to the Dean of Arts & Sciences along with the recommendation of the Executive Committee together with the reasons for the recommendation.

***Criteria Relevant to RPT:***

- a) Philosophical ability and achievement: (As evidenced by dissertation, publications, papers in progress, colloquium presentations, informal discussions, professional recognition and standing, etc.)
- b) Teaching ability and achievement: (Undergraduate and graduate, within and without the classroom, including independent study courses and direction of dissertations.)
- c) Service to the University and academic community: (Administrative contributions, committee work, editorial work for journals, contributions to learned societies, etc.)
- d) Value as a colleague: (The ability of the individual to function effectively as a productive and useful member of the Department, and his/her willingness and ability to give of himself/herself to promote its general academic welfare.)
- e) Objectives and aspirations of, and constraints upon, the Department: (This criterion embraces such matters as: directions in which the Executive Committee would like the Department to move, e.g., to strengthen certain fields and competences, adequate representation of minority or women members, financial facts of life, etc.)

***Standards for Tenure:*** The candidate must be exceptional with respect to the criterion (a), i.e., the candidate must be a philosopher of exceptional ability and achievement commensurate with senior membership in a distinguished Department. The foregoing is a *sine qua non* condition of award of tenure. To satisfy criterion (b), the candidate must be well above average in either graduate or undergraduate teaching, not necessarily in both. Criteria (c) and (d) serve more to disqualify than qualify. That is, someone who fails to fare well relative to (c) and (d) would have to rate even higher on (a) and (b) to receive tenure. Criterion (e) functions in an obvious external way. For example, a person

otherwise qualified for tenure in an already well-staffed field might be denied tenure by reason of (e).

***Criteria and Standards Governing Reappointment That Does Not Carry Tenure:*** In addition to criteria (a) through (e) above, the individual's prospects for eventual promotion and tenure constitute a relevant criterion for reappointment that does not carry tenure.

A positive recommendation to reappoint will be made by the Executive Committee only if it deems that the individual will make a valuable contribution to the academic well-being of the Department during the period of reappointment and, normally, only if the individual shows some promise of eventually qualifying for promotion and tenure. But in exceptional circumstances even someone who is deemed by the Executive Committee to have no hope whatsoever of eventual promotion and tenure may be recommended by reappointment if the Executive Committee believes that the individual's teaching or other services are sufficiently valuable on a temporary basis to the Department.

Reappointment carries no presumption of eventual tenure or even of further reappointment.

***Periodic Review of Performance of Non-tenured Faculty:*** Each non-tenured member of the Department is encouraged to meet privately each year (most suitably late in the Spring Term) with the Chairperson to discuss the quality of his/her performance in the Department and his/her prospects for reappointment, promotion, or tenure. Although the Chairperson obviously cannot speak on this occasion for the Executive Committee, the Chairperson shall do his/her best to give the individual as accurate, objective, and candid an evaluation as the Chairperson possibly can of the individual's performance and prospects.

***Grievance Procedures:*** In the event that a negative recommendation is made by the Executive Committee or by the Chairperson, or a negative decision is reached by higher authority against the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson shall acquaint the individual faculty member with the established institutional grievance procedures in the event that the individual faculty member feels that an improper recommendation or decision has been made.

***Date of Adoption:*** The criteria and standards articulated in this document have been in force for many years, as have most of the procedures prescribed herein. This document was officially approved and adopted by the Executive Committee of the Department of Philosophy on September 27, 1972, and amended on April 28, 1980.

## **JOINT DEPARTMENTAL MEMBERSHIP**

### *SECONDARY MEMBERS*

Secondary Members are persons with primary appointments in other University of Pittsburgh departments who are philosophers by training and research interests and whom the Philosophy Department holds to be qualified and suitable to involve in its program. Secondary Members

- (1) may direct dissertations in the department and are expected to serve regularly on dissertation committees;
- (2) are encouraged occasionally to offer a course primarily for the department under its aegis and rubric, and/or courses suitable for cross-listing by the department, but only with approval from the Graduate or Undergraduate Committee, with a limit of two cross listed courses of Secondary or Affiliated Members to count toward the graduate or undergraduate degree in philosophy;
- (3) are encouraged to participate actively in the life of the department;
- (4) are normally appointed for three years and may be renewed any number of times;
- (5) are appointed and renewed on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Amended 10 February 2012

### *AFFILIATED FACULTY*

Affiliated faculty are persons with primary appointments in other University of Pittsburgh departments who have professional interests in philosophy and whose accomplishments the Philosophy Department wishes to recognize by according affiliated membership. Affiliated Faculty

- (1) are expected occasionally to serve on dissertation committees;
- (2) are expected from time to time offer courses of special interest to students in philosophy-courses the Philosophy Department will bring to the attention of its students;
- (3) may offer courses suitable for crosslisting by the department, but only with approval from the Graduate or Undergraduate Committee, with a limit of two crosslisted courses of Affiliated or Secondary Members to count toward the graduate or undergraduate degree in philosophy;

- (4) are encouraged to participate actively in the life of the department;
- (5) are normally appointed for three years and may be renewed any number of times;
- (6) are appointed and renewed on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

*ADJUNCT MEMBERS*

Persons whose primary employment is outside an academic unit of the university but who are fully qualified for primary membership in the department and who perform on a part-time or irregular basis duties that would normally be carried out by primary or secondary members of the department.

Revised, 22 January 1992

**POLICY REGARDING THE EVALUATION OF TEACHING**  
**PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT**

1. Each full-time faculty member will establish, and maintain current, a teaching portfolio. To be complete, such a portfolio should include:
  - a) Statement of teaching philosophy, methodology, and goals, addressing the different aims and methods appropriate to introductory lecture courses, upper-division undergraduate courses, and graduate seminars.
  - b) An index of courses taught each term, including independent study and dissertation supervision and committee work.
  - c) Course materials such as syllabi, reading lists, handouts, examinations.
  - d) Student evaluations.
  - e) Peer evaluations.
2. As in the past, all undergraduate courses must be subject to student evaluation as administered by the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching.
3. Faculty members are responsible for arranging regular peer evaluation of their teaching.
  - a) Peer evaluations are to be conducted by an eligible professional colleague selected by the faculty member being evaluated.
  - b) Peer evaluations are to be considered exclusively formative rather than summative. That is, their purpose is in every case to aid the individual evaluated in improving his or her teaching.
  - c) Peer evaluations may be based on experience team-teaching a course, attendance at meetings of a course, or interviews.
  - d) Peer evaluations by professional colleagues will occur for untenured faculty at least once every year, and for tenured faculty at least once every two years. Over time they are to represent an appropriate range of courses at different levels
  - e) No faculty member is eligible to serve as an evaluator more than once a year.
4. It is the responsibility of the Chair to remind faculty of their responsibilities with respect to items (1), (2), and (3) above. The teaching dossier is to be one of the topics of discussion at the Chair's annual meeting with each individual faculty member.
5. Teaching effectiveness will be taken into consideration in decisions pertaining to faculty hiring, renewal, promotion, tenure, and salary increments.

6. Graduate students teaching as Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows are subject to analogs of requirements (1), (2), and (3). Their teaching in every course is to be evaluated by students and by faculty, the latter being either those having overall responsibility for the course (for Teaching Assistants), or their faculty teaching mentors (for Teaching Fellows).

Effective, 11/94

## VISITING SCHOLARS

In recent years the Department has appointed a number of Visiting Scholars, who receive library and computer privileges and the right to participate (with the instructor's permission) in graduate seminars. As the number of requests for Visiting Scholar status seems to be increasing, I requested the advice of the Executive Committee in establishing guidelines for the Chair to use in responding to these requests. Taking the sense of the meeting together with existing guidelines, I intend to proceed on the following basis.

1. Persons who hold a doctoral degree in philosophy or its equivalent, and/or would be on leave from full-time academic positions:

A request may be submitted directly to the Chair of the Department and should be granted provided mutual benefit may be expected. A request should include a c.v., a letter of recommendation, a sample of written work, a research plan, and an indication of members of this department with whom the requester would especially wish to interact.

2. Persons currently in doctoral studies in philosophy elsewhere, but who seek no credit for work done here (persons seeking credit must apply for Special Student status and pay fees):

A request should be submitted to the Chair by a faculty sponsor in the Department, and should include a statement of his/her interest in sponsoring the student, and his/her willingness to serve informally as the student's advisor. In considering such a request, the Chair must be satisfied that the sponsor's availability to the Department's own students will not be affected and should judge that the visiting student's presence will be of benefit to the sponsor and the Department.

The request should include a transcript, c.v., a letter of recommendation from the student's home institution, a sample of written work (or a statement by the sponsor attesting to his/her familiarity with the student's work), and a research plan. The Chair should be satisfied that the student's work is comparable in quality to that of the Department's own senior graduate students.

3. Exceptional cases may not fall easily under the above guidelines. In general, the Chair should bear in mind that Visiting Scholars should benefit the philosophical community in Pittsburgh by their presence, and should not be receiving services from the Department (including the time of faculty members) to an extent that would affect the availability of these services to regular members of the University.

New Undergraduate Course Approval Process

The Department of Philosophy permits faculty members wanting to offer a new undergraduate course to submit a proposal to the Director of Undergraduate Studies. The proposal should consist of a course description, a proposed syllabus with clear grading policies and standards, as well as an account of the difference from similar courses.

The Departmental Undergraduate Committee will review the proposal for academic rigor and contribution to the curriculum. If approved by the committee, the course will be brought before a full faculty meeting for final approval.

It is understood that courses intended to satisfy one of the General Education requirements will require approval by the Council.

Effective: October, 2010