

**ASSOCIATION FOR THEATRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION
GUIDELINES FOR TENURE AND PROMOTION**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Preamble</u>	1
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Tenure and Promotion in Theatre	2
III. Areas of Evaluation	
A. Research and Scholarship	4
B. Teaching.....	5
C. Service.....	6
IV. The Tenure Process	
A. The Search and Hire.....	7
B. Factors for Tenure.....	8
V. Tenure Review	9
VI. The Tenure/Promotion File	9
VII. Evaluating Creative Production	
A. External Peer Review.....	12
B. Review Materials Documenting Creative Production in the Tenure and Promotion File	14
C. General Criteria for Evaluation.....	15
VIII. Expectations for Theatre Professors	16
IX. Tenure and Promotion Checklist for Candidates	17
X. Theatre Specialists Pages	
A. On the Nature of Academic Appointments in Theatre	19
B. About the Theatre Specialist Pages.....	21
C. Combined Specialties and the Theatre Generalist	21
D. Specialist Pages	
▪ Actor	23
▪ Arts Administrator	24
▪ Designers.....	25
○ Costume Designer.....	26
○ Lighting Designer	27
○ Scenic Designer	28
○ Sound Designer.....	29

▪ Director	32
▪ Dramaturg / Theatre Critic	34
▪ Fight Choreographer/Fight Director	35
▪ Movement Specialist.....	37
▪ Musical Theatre Specialists	40
○ Musical Theatre Director/Actor	40
○ Choreographer.....	41
○ Vocal Coach / Conductor or Music Director	42
▪ Playwright.....	43
▪ Stage Manager / Production Manager.....	44
▪ Technical Director	46
▪ Theatre Educator / Youth Theatre Specialist	47
▪ Theatre Historian / Theorist.....	48
▪ Voice Specialist	50

Appendices

Appendix I: Workload	53
Appendix II: The Teaching Portfolio.....	54
Appendix III: KCATF and Peer Review	55
Appendix IV: Executive Summary.....	58
Appendix V: Resources	
Books on Education, Academic Portfolios and Assessment	60
Online Resources	60
Theatre Associations.....	62
Related ATHE Documents	62
<u>About the Authors and Development of the Guidelines</u>	63

PREAMBLE

The Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) fully endorses the tenure system in colleges and universities. In the arts, especially in the theatre, academic freedom and responsibility may overlap with issues of public taste, public tolerance, and public consumption. All of these issues increase the pressures on academic theatre not only to teach truthfully but also to present and perform with the same ethical and pedagogical rigor. The only way to guarantee this freedom to teach and perform in the best interests of our students has been through the considered and even-handed application of the principles of tenure. ATHE serves as a strong advocate for maintaining that system through the establishment and sustaining of tenure-track and tenured positions for faculty in the field of theatre and performance studies. Tenure, when awarded with discernment and according to the highest standards of the discipline assures the long-term quality of the institution and its units. The quality of an academic institution depends directly on the quality of the faculty. Tenure is an important incentive and the policy that promotes the long-term residency at the institution of the very best faculty.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) is a comprehensive nonprofit professional membership organization. An advocate for the field of theatre and performance in higher education, ATHE serves as an intellectual and artistic center for producing new knowledge about theatre and performance related disciplines, cultivating vital alliances with other scholarly and creative disciplines, linking with professional and community-based theatres, and promoting access and equity.¹ In 2008 ATHE's Professional Development Committee created a Tenure and Promotion Task Force to develop *The ATHE Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion*.²

This document is modeled on the *USITT Tenure and Promotion Guidelines*³. It incorporates documents developed by ATHE's Governing Council and Focus Groups over more than twenty years. This document aims to (1) consolidate those earlier documents into a cohesive set of guidelines that encompass the full range of activities for those teaching and creating theatre in higher education: teaching, scholarship, creative achievement, and service; and (2) to complement the USITT guidelines which address the disciplinary areas of theatrical design, stage management and technology.⁴

The goal of the *ATHE Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion* is to explain the process and the expectations for academic activities and outline the professional standards for candidates from the field of theatre who are pursuing tenure and promotion. These

¹ From the ATHE web site, ATHE.org.

² For details of those who served on the Task Force – see the end of this document.

³ United States Institute of Theatre Technology, Bruce Brockman, ed., 2000.

⁴ In order to create a comprehensive document, we have, with permission from USITT, incorporated sections of their Guidelines when referring to the USITT disciplinary areas.

guidelines provide essential information for theatre faculty who are candidates for tenure or promotion and for department and program heads, tenure and promotion committees, and administrators who are responsible for evaluating the accomplishments of faculty members.

Candidates for tenure and/or promotion and those who evaluate them should be aware that institutions vary in their expectations for granting tenure and promotion and in their evaluation process. It is incumbent upon candidates to be informed about their institutions' expectations and mandated procedures and to adhere to such procedures. These guidelines are meant to assist in that process but they do not supersede or replace an institution's guidelines or policies.

II. TENURE AND PROMOTION IN THEATRE¹

Tenure and promotion are academic activities that require documented evidence of a candidate's abilities in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. The relative importance of each area will vary according to the particular institution and its mission. The candidate undergoes review and each of the areas is assessed according to the tenure and/or promotion policies of the institution. Candidates must provide evidence of sufficient quality and quantity of achievement in each of the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service as well as show potential for sustained achievement in their field.

The scholarship of theatre professors is rendered in one or both forms of traditional academic endeavor: research leading to publication and/or research leading to creative production. Research and publication scholarship is traditional to theatre historians, critics, and dramaturgs. Research and creative production scholarship is traditional to those involved in the production process and includes acting, directing, playwriting, dramaturgy, voice and movement direction, scene design, costume design, lighting design, and sound design, and the execution of those designs by specialists in technical production, theatre management, and stage management. Creative production is common among and traditional to a broad range of academic disciplines, including art, music, dance, interactive media, computer science, engineering, journalism, film, video production, creative writing, fashion design and merchandising, hospitality management, creative writing, advertising, marketing, sports communication and management, and physical therapy. Research and creative production scholarship, as in these other disciplines, requires substantial historical and technological investigation, analysis, expertise, a synthesis of information, collaboration, imagination, creativity, skill, talent, and professional experience—all leading to public presentation validated by professional peer review. Many theatre professors engage in both kinds of scholarship.

¹ ATHE recognizes that theatre study may be conducted in a department, school, college, program or other institutional unit and may be found under many headings, such as "theatre," "drama," "performance studies," and/or be combined or subsumed under other disciplines, such as humanities, English, speech, communication studies, etc. For the purpose of these guidelines, "theatre department" is used as a generic term to apply to any academic institution's program where theatre studies are conducted.

This document presumes that preparation of theatrical events for public performance allows the production oriented theatre professor a viable opportunity for demonstrating artistic achievement required for promotion and tenure decisions. The production of plays and performances and the study thereof constitute the discipline of theatre. In recognition of the artistic component of theatre, institutions of higher education include creative achievement as an official component for promotion and tenure consideration.¹

In addition, *The ATHE Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion* are congruent with the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) accreditation guidelines, which state that “creative activity must be regarded as being equivalent to scholarly efforts and publication when the institution has goals and objectives for the preparation of theatre professionals in practice-oriented specializations.”² Although the NAST guidelines are most specific in their application to practice-oriented theatre programs, as demonstrated above, research and creative production scholarship is a traditional element of theatre programs, regardless of whether the focus is on liberal arts training or preparation of theatre professionals.

The USITT Guidelines also state that:

*For many college and university departments, traditionally accepted forms of contribution include laboratory or field research or other scholarly investigations that generally result in grant funding and publication. These serve as validation of the investigator’s work and provide a dissemination of the results of the investigation or demonstrate new knowledge acquired. Over the past several years, a strong case has been made for the acceptance of creative activities as an appropriate form of “research” for faculty members teaching in the fine and performing arts. The results of these creative activities are generally disseminated through public performances, concerts, exhibitions and readings.*³

In consonance with USITT and with the guidelines of the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), ATHE affirms that research and creative production is an appropriate form of scholarship for all theatre professors. Such activities

¹ Many institutions, adopting the 1990 Boyer model for evaluating scholarship, have placed creative achievement as one component of the “scholarship of discovery” and “scholarship of application” in that mode. ATHE’s white paper, which outlines methods for employing the model, “Scholarship for the Discipline of Theatre,” expands on the criteria used by many institutions regarding various forms of traditional scholarship, such as teaching, scholarly publication, and service, in promotion and tenure deliberations. For more information on these studies, resources include *Scholarship for the Discipline of Theatre: An Association for Theatre in Higher Education White Paper* and Ernest Boyer’s *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990.

² N.A.S.T. Handbook 2010-11, II, E, 3, 1, (3)

³ USITT Guidelines, pp. 3-4. In fact, many institutions (as well as ATHE) began formalizing a process for accepting “creative publication” as a type of scholarship in the early 1980s, so the case for the acceptance of creative activities as research has been made for over 30 years.

incorporate the process of research, creation of new work, and dissemination through public performance.

The discipline of theatre is also distinct in that the individual practitioner (actor, director, designer, etc.) cannot always choose the artistic project or control the working conditions of the project. Theatre is a collaborative process where artists work together to create the artistic product – which may complicate the ability to assess the work of the individual’s contribution. Theatre artists must come to a shared vision or interpretation of the artwork and must adapt their work to the resources available – from venue, to timeframe, to budgets, to artistic personnel. The context of a theatre artist’s creative work must be considered in any evaluation.

Evaluation of faculty theatre professors should also be conducted in the context of the mission of the department’s theatrical production program. Production programs can have vastly different missions. For example: (1) to provide a cultural resource to the community and academic institution, (2) to develop new or experimental work, (3) to train theatre artists for the profession or to teach, (4) to allow theatre students to experience all phases of theatrical production, (5) to credential future teachers, (6) to provide a rich liberal arts experience, etc. Whatever the mission, the individual professor should be evaluated according to his/her effectiveness in fostering and promoting those aims. The evaluation of the artistic product and the individual artist’s work must be conducted within in the context in which it was created.

Unlike the scholar who submits only successful publications for promotion and tenure (i.e., research that has been published), the theatre professor submits the total corpus of creative activity to some level of evaluation, because all the creative work is made public. Given this distinction and given the subjective nature of artistic evaluation, the candidate for promotion or tenure, as well as the department personnel committee and department head face unique challenges to provide a framework for assessing the overall artistic contribution of the artist. Departments should insist upon expert documentation of a fair sample of the artist’s work. Moreover, theatre professors, like any other scholars, should have the right to select the work to be evaluated by external reviewers and the right of reasonable refusal of names on the potential juror list.

III. AREAS OF EVALUATION

A. Research and Scholarship

Institutions of higher education require theatre faculty to provide evidence of achievements in scholarship, which is defined as research leading to publication or research leading to creative production. Research may lead to publication in the form of journal articles, books (including electronic publication), performance reviews, and authorship of original play scripts. Other scholarly activities may include presentations at professional conferences (e.g., scholarship presented in papers, poster sessions, workshops, etc), authorship of grants, and editing journals or other publications. In academic theatre, research and publication may be centered on the

specialization area (e.g., directing or design), but it may also include pedagogical research -- examining the teaching of theatre.¹

The theatre professor meets the requirement for research and creative production by engaging in the creation of theatrical performances and productions. Academic theatre artists collect, analyze, and synthesize data both before and during the rehearsal process. This research is conducted both individually and collaboratively. The results of the research and the creative exploration are disseminated in public performance. The preliminary research, development through rehearsal, and the final production may be documented in many ways. Documentation may include designs, models, photographs, slides, and recordings of performance, prompt/production books, interviews, articles and essays that relate to the production, as well as reviews and evaluations by qualified respondents.

While any production demands creativity, the nature of the individual's contribution may vary significantly in terms of level of responsibility, venue, significance, available resources, and time commitment. Therefore, the work must be viewed in the context of the production situation.

B. Teaching

Institutions of higher education require faculty to provide evidence of excellence in teaching, which may include both formal and informal teaching. Formal teaching encompasses traditional lecture and studio classes, seminars, laboratories, independent studies, and thesis/dissertation supervision. Informal teaching encompasses interaction with students in production studios, rehearsals and performance as well as advising, coaching, designing, directing and mentoring. ATHE considers that an artist, when working on a theatrical production for the academic institution, has the responsibility to teach and coach students by exemplifying artistic excellence, collaboration, ethical integrity and pedagogical effectiveness. It is important to provide evaluation of both the formal and informal teaching expertise.

It should be noted that the college or university determines how to classify on campus creative work in theatrical production. In some institutions, directing, acting, or designing for a campus production is part of the instructor's workload and therefore considered teaching. In other institutions, the creative work may be considered scholarship. In some cases, the aspects of the creative work may be split between teaching and scholarship. How the activity is characterized determines the appropriate manner of evaluating the activity. It is incumbent on both the institution and the candidate to clarify which aspects of a project should be categorized as service, scholarship, or teaching.

¹ For more information on pedagogical research as it relates to theatre, see the ATHE white paper, "Scholarship for the Discipline of Theatre."

Faculty should be evaluated for their teaching performance in a timely and ongoing process in accordance with institutional guidelines. Faculty may be evaluated by: (1) documentation in an academic portfolio; (2) evaluation by colleagues within the institution and from peers at other institutions (where the evaluator has knowledge of the candidate's teaching expertise); (3) letters from the candidate's current or former students; and (4) student evaluations; (5) student evaluations of the production process. As negotiated by the candidate and the institution, production work, curricular development, and assessment activities may be regarded as teaching and evaluated accordingly.

C. Service

Institutions of higher education usually require faculty to provide evidence of service for tenure and promotion. The expectation for service and its value in relation to scholarly, creative and teaching achievement will depend upon the institutional mission. Service is evaluated in three areas: the institution, the region, and in the professional discipline.

Service at the university includes advising or recruiting activities, participation on committees, faculty senate, presentations or other activities on campus. The institution should define the expectations for service within the department (and its relative value to service outside the discipline of theatre). Some kinds of production work may be regarded as service: community-based or service-learning, outreach activities, and interactive theatre projects, etc. In such cases, it is incumbent on the candidate to clarify which aspects of a project should be categorized as service, scholarship work or teaching.

It is not unusual for theatre faculty to have an inordinate amount of hours devoted to service to students. In addition to the long hours of rehearsal and production (as many as 100 to 150 hours a production), theatre faculty prepare students for auditions, advise student directors, designers, and actors, and mentor students in their careers as well as their academics.

Service in the region may include engagement in civic and charitable activity. This element of service may or may not be a factor in tenure and promotion. Again, the institution sets forth its expectations.

Other off-campus service includes service to the profession, which generally is a factor in tenure and promotion decisions. This service includes leadership in professional organizations, peer teaching, development and advocacy. Service may also include program review, tenure and promotion review, adjudication and response, and consulting.

IV. THE TENURE PROCESS

A. The Search and Hire

The search for a tenure track faculty member may vary considerably depending upon the policies of the institution. The search generally begins with the administration granting approval to open a search based upon a position description provided by the department/unit. Then a search committee is formed and the position announcement is distributed through professional publications and on-line.¹ Applicants submit materials requested (usually documentation of credentials and experience in teaching, service, and scholarship activities, and names of references and/or letters of referees). The committee reviews all the materials and then selects candidates for the next phase of the hiring process, which may include (1) calling references, (2) telephone or video interview, (3) invitation to interview on campus. Following this process, the committee sends forth its recommendation for hire to the administration.

The candidate for the tenure-track position should carefully review the job description in the position announcement, noting what are the required or preferred qualifications as well as the duties and responsibilities of the position. When the candidate is placed on the short list or invited for the campus interview, the candidate should inquire about the expectations related to tenure and ask about workloads, including teaching and production, creative work outside the university, and the definition of and the expectations for scholarship. For example, is creative work on campus considered scholarship, teaching, or service? Is the candidate expected to work professionally off-campus? If so, is time off provided to take advantage of professional opportunities? Is directing or designing or other production work considered part of the teaching workload and, if so, is it evaluated as teaching or creative work?²

The candidate should be aware that the tenure process begins at the time of hire. The expectations set forth at the time of hire are the foundation for the annual review and the eventual tenure decision, so it is incumbent upon the applicant to fully understand the terms of the appointment. Those terms should be provided in writing at the time of hire in the Letter of Offer. The Letter of Offer should provide detailed information on:

- the position description, outlining duties and responsibilities;
- the length of appointment (one year, multi-year, etc.);
- the nature of appointment (fixed term or probationary);
- the contract period: academic (9-month) or annual (10-month, 12-month, etc.);
- the credit for prior service, if any, and timeframe in which a decision for tenure will be made;

¹ See ATHE's Ethics Task Force Report for guidelines for faculty position announcements and appointments.

² Candidates are encouraged to use the "Tenure and Promotion Checklist" section IX of these guidelines.

- the pre-tenure sabbatical time, if any;
- the salary and benefits;
- the equipment or startup funds, coverage of moving expenses, if any;
- conditions the contract may be renewed or terminated; and
- any other negotiated terms of employment.

The eventual tenure decision will be based on how the candidate meets the expectations set forth at the time of hire. Therefore at the time of the appointment, both the institution and the candidate must agree upon clearly defined institutional expectations covering teaching, scholarship, and service. If there are any questions about expectations, the candidate should request written clarification at the time of the offer or shortly after and get the document approved at the appropriate administrative levels. It is expected that the candidate will be able to demonstrate growth in pedagogy, scholarship, and artistic excellence, with a clear developmental agenda rooted in the expectations set forth at the time of hire.

B. Factors for Tenure

Appointments, tenure, and promotions at all institutions should be governed by guidelines established by the department, college, and university and should be clearly described in official documents. Any new hire in a tenure-track position should request all such documents and review them. There might be separate documents for the various institutional levels.

Institutions will usually require some kind of annual review of the tenure-track faculty member who is on a probationary status until the tenure decision. This annual review provides a significant periodic evaluation of the candidate's progress towards tenure. Where the annual review is not part of the evaluation process, the faculty member can take the initiative and write a summary of the year's activities and plans for the upcoming year and ask for feedback from the department chair to ascertain if their work current work and planning is in line with the expectations of the department and institution.

When the candidate applies for tenure, a committee is usually formed to conduct a review. The candidate will be expected to produce a file offering documentation according to the guidelines and policies in place at that institution. The task of the committee is to review the candidate's teaching, scholarship, and service.

Teaching and scholarship are of primary importance in the tenure review. Service (at all levels) may also be a factor, depending upon the particular institution. It is incumbent upon the candidate to demonstrate the ability to sustain a level of quality teaching throughout his or her career. Teaching, service, and research/publication in theatre are assessed similarly to faculty in other disciplines of the college or university. The assessment of research/creative production needs to be carried out in a manner that is appropriate for the responsibilities and nature of the work of the

theatre artist. Depending upon the institution's policies, the tenure review committee may solicit evaluations from peer reviewers outside the candidate's institution.

V. TENURE REVIEW

Entry-level, tenure line positions are typically Assistant Professorships. Assistant Professors serve a predetermined time in rank, usually going up for tenure in the sixth or seventh year. This timeframe should be specifically set forth in the Letter of Offer. If tenure is denied, the candidate must leave the institution (although the faculty member may be given one more year to seek another position). Tenure may be conferred with or without promotion, as determined by the institution.

Some institutions have a process that includes a "third year review," "pre-tenure review" or "mock tenure" evaluation about halfway through the probationary period. This is a more specific evaluation than the annual review (possibly by a department committee) and it should identify areas where expectations are not on track for tenure. Such early evaluation is intended to help the candidate address those shortcomings in the time remaining before the actual tenure review. If a candidate was hired with some years of experience, the candidate may go up for tenure in two or three years after hire (instead of the more usual six years after hire). In such cases the candidate must clearly stay on track to accomplish the expectations set forth at the time of hire within the abbreviated timeframe. It is not always in the candidate's best interest to accelerate the tenure review process. It may therefore be advantageous to negotiate a later review date.

Tenure review is usually structured and initiated at the department level, although the review could be initiated by the candidate or the college or may be handled at the university level. The candidate prepares a dossier (tenure file) and a tenure review committee is established. A dossier may also be established for reappointment and for promotion to Associate Professor and Full Professor.

The review process and scope of the evaluation should be clearly established, both at the department level and at the upper levels of administration. Committees at every administrative level will generally review the tenure/promotion file and forward a recommendation to the Provost and President's office.

VI. THE TENURE/PROMOTION FILE

Note: Given the diversity and uniqueness of institutions of higher education throughout the United States, there are endless variations in the content of the tenure or promotion file and in the process of the evaluation of the file. What follows is a description of common practice, but it is the prerogative of the institution to establish the requirements for the tenure/promotion file and its evaluation and it is the responsibility of the candidate to adhere to the institution's requirements in this regard.

Typically the tenure/promotion file consists of a narrative or personal statement and evidence of excellence in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. The purpose

of the narrative is to provide self-assessment and a context for the candidate's achievements. The narrative gives an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their growth throughout the review period, as well as to demonstrate potential for future accomplishment. Institutions vary with respect to the achievements that count toward tenure and promotion if those achievements pre-date the start of the review period.

The required documentation for tenure and promotion should be clearly set forth by the department and administration. Typically, the evaluation file will include:

- The candidate's current curriculum vitae
- Documentation of teaching
- Documentation of scholarship (research leading to publication and research leading to creative production)
- Documentation of service to the institution and profession
- Written evaluation by faculty peers and the department chair
- Written evaluation by outside experts (who may be faculty or professional referees)

The documentation for quality teaching may include the following:

- Description of classes and workshops and the kinds of teaching and advising the candidate does
- Summary of classes taught in the probationary period
- Description of curricular development (courses and programs of study)
- Pedagogical innovations
- Assessment activities
- Samples of syllabi, assignments
- Student evaluations of course (or a data summary plus comments)
- Student evaluation of the production process
- Letters from current or former students¹
- For candidates who have directed graduate study, a list of the names and dates of graduates advised is typically included with evaluations from those individuals

The documentation of teaching may be in the form of an academic portfolio.²

The documentation for achievement in research and publication may include the following:

- Copies of published articles, performance reviews, and web publications
- Original plays, translations, and adaptations¹

¹ In no case should unsigned letters from students be included in the tenure/promotion file. Candidates and the chair need to be aware of the institutions policies regarding the inclusion of solicited or unsolicited letters from students and alumni.

² See Appendices II and IV-A.

- Books, monographs, or book-length publications (or abstracts of them)
- Reviews and acknowledgement of those publications where appropriate
- Authorship of successful grants
- Honors and awards

The materials documenting research and creative production will vary according to the sub-discipline or specialty.² The creative portfolio may be part of the evaluation file, but may only be required at the department level and offered as supporting documentation at the school or college level for reference by committee members desiring additional information about the candidate. This practice varies by institution.

A portfolio of material that documents creative production (on campus or off campus) may include:

- Working drawings, light plots, renderings, exhibitions or other public displays of costume or set designs
- Director's production books, study guides, program notes; prompt books
- Written evaluation (by qualified adjudicators) of work submitted for competitions
- Evaluations by directors, designers, coaches, and/or fellow cast members or other artists who were collaborators on the creative project (may include professional peers or students)
- Marketing and public relations materials
- Letters from the public, testimonials, reviews in the professional media
- Honors and awards

A theatre artist may document the quality of off-campus professional activity in a variety of ways, including:

- Demonstrating a record of continuous activity in the profession through appointed or elected leadership positions in professional organizations
- Demonstrating professional recognition through such achievements as competitive union memberships, honors and accolades, invited presentations, lectures and performances
- Demonstrating peer approval of skill mastery such as invitations to teach master classes or lead intensive workshops, and/or
- Demonstrating professional competency through successful employment by reputable professional theatre companies
- Demonstrating a record of mentoring and advising professional theatre companies and artists

¹ The work of playwrights, librettists, and composers may be considered successfully adjudicated when accepted for performance or published by a reputable leasing company or established publisher.

² See Section X of these guidelines for Theatre Specialist pages

After the tenure committee and the department chair have evaluated the dossier, recommendations are sent forward that include the names of the evaluators and a description of the evaluation process that led to the recommendation. The file and recommendation(s) then go to the college or school and university for further and final action (which may be determined by committees at those levels). The recommendations at each level usually provide a context for the positive or negative decision and a summary of the vote.

VII. EVALUATING CREATIVE PRODUCTION

A. External Professional Peer Review

For theatre scholars and traditional academics, professional peer review is the primary indicator of quality in published research. Professional peer review is also the appropriate basis for assessment of theatre professors who are theatre artists. Scholarship in the form of creative production requires independent professional (non-departmental, non-institutional) evaluation. It is the responsibility of the academic unit/institution to articulate in writing the mechanisms of that review.

External Professional Peer Review encompasses a range of activities, including (but not limited to):

- Being hired to be part of a professional theatre production
- Winning a prestigious award or honor
- Being reviewed by a recognized theatre critic or professional journal
- Receiving a commission to write a play or create a production
- Review of production(s) by an independent professional peer(s)

External Professional Peer Review may be used to evaluate a particular theatre production or it may be used to evaluate the creative production over a period of years. Such reviews are based in part on a portfolio of materials provided by the candidate, which document the candidate's scholarship (research leading to creative production) and any other aspects, according to the requirements for review set by the institution. When external professional peer review is required, the candidate's evaluation file usually includes the referee solicitation letter outlining the scope and type of evaluation requested. Some institutions may require that a vita of the referee or a brief statement indicating the appropriateness of the referee be included in the candidate's file to give context to the outside peer review.

Although it is appropriate in most disciplines to send out vitae and supporting documentation to a number of external reviewers for comment, for theatre professors, this form of external review does not provide the context of the production, including existing talent pool, support personnel, budget, facilities, and time constraints. Although documentation of the performance experience is possible, the portfolio

cannot replace the experience of seeing the live performance of the work. So while portfolio review by external reviewers is an important part of any peer review process, ideally, whenever possible the peer reviewers should have the opportunity to see the candidate's work in live performance so they may understand the context or circumstances under which the work was created.

Where external professional peer reviewers cannot be brought in to see live theatre performance, the candidate can and should incorporate technology to put together video and interactive media compilations that demonstrate a range of skills and achievements. Such evidence can be made readily accessible to a wide variety of reviewers through online postings, applications, and fixed digital media. Such technology also makes it possible for multiple reviewers to evaluate creative production as demonstrated by the actor or director's "professional reel" or video of full performances, designers' interactive online exhibitions, real-time displays in virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), and videoconferencing.

It is the recommendation of ATHE that the committees or individuals responsible for preparing tenure cases invite outside referees to evaluate the work of potential tenure candidates on a regular basis—at least one production a year. In this way, there can be a significant body of material to include in the final tenure evaluation package. It should be the work of the department to inform the institution of the importance of this regular ongoing review and to obtain permission for the inclusion of such regular review material at the time of tenure.

Depending upon institutional policy, it may be the responsibility of the candidate to provide evaluators with evidence of his/her abilities or this task may be shared with the department chair. ATHE recommends that a list of potential external evaluators agreeable to the department and the dean might be maintained from which evaluators could be drawn to provide a written response to production work. Where on campus evaluation of creative production is required, institutions should be prepared to underwrite the cost of bringing external evaluators to the campus for the on-campus production. It is important that, in so far as possible, such jurors or experts be without professional or personal connection with the teacher artist under review and that they have appropriate credentials for assessing the candidate.

Listed below are suggestions of materials that might be supplied to all evaluators to illustrate the faculty member's contributions to the creative production processes along with suggested questions that evaluators might seek to answer when reviewing the creative work of any of these faculty members.

B. Review Materials Documenting Creative Production in the Tenure and Promotion File¹

At the time stipulated for the review, the candidate to be evaluated submits a portfolio, which usually includes a professional curriculum vita and supportive materials that illustrate the creative work and/or production activities of the faculty member. This general documentation is described above in the section on the “Tenure and Promotion File.” It is in the candidate’s best interest that these portfolio materials be of high quality and demonstrate the range of responsibilities inherent in the position of the faculty member being evaluated.

The contents of the portfolio should be tailored to the candidate’s area of specialty. There are, however, common factors that should be considered and similar formatting and materials that can be expected from all positions.

A fair sample of the creative work should be represented and, when possible, information and documentation of the complete production process should be supplied to reveal the approach to the production and the solutions found by the faculty member. The following information is typically provided for consideration by the evaluating team:

1. Information on the production and production team: title of the play, playwright, venue and nature of the producing theatre, names of the director, dramaturg, musical, director, and members of the design team, date of completion, dates of production, etc.
2. Production process information:
 - Brief statement of the production concept, script analysis, and statement of how the faculty member’s work was used to illustrate the concept.
 - Approximate time available for research, design, and execution, as appropriate.
 - Identification of artistic or technological innovations associated with the production.
3. Production information: Any information that will provide evaluators with details of the faculty member’s responsibilities and caliber of work on this production. Examples might include photographs or slides, audio, video or electronic recordings of performance, prompt books, story boards, dramaturgical research and analytical materials, research into dialects or specialized movement, light plots, scene design renderings, costume plates, or information on budget, crew size and skill, theatre facilities if relevant to the work.
4. Candidate’s self-evaluation of his/her contributions on the production.

¹ Some institutions are now requiring faculty to produce hard copy dossiers and to also maintain an electronic portfolio.

C. General Criteria for Evaluation

Materials submitted for evaluation of creative work should show:

Production Expertise

1. Demonstrated abilities and artistic skills in illustrating/recording the person's artistry, creativity, technical solutions, or organizational management in a clear and professional manner.
2. Knowledge and demonstrated abilities in the area of specialization (e.g., manipulating design elements, creating effective staging, effectively coaching actors in acting, movement or voice, integrating dramaturgical research into the production process, developmental work on scripts, etc.).
3. Knowledge and demonstrated abilities in using materials and methods appropriate to the design, production, and/or specialty area.
4. Knowledge and demonstrated abilities in understanding the theatrical production process. Included in this category are: providing appropriate space for actors/dancers and the action of the piece; elements that support the characters; elements that enhance the techniques and skills of the director/choreographer; collaborative skills in working with dramaturgs, playwrights, musical directors, composers, designers and technicians; organizational skills in functioning as part of a creative team.
5. Knowledge and practice of appropriate safety procedures, regulations, production policies, and legal and ethical standards.
6. Knowledge and skill in employing appropriate technological advances in the candidate's field.
7. Demonstrated knowledge of dramatic literature, theory, and history (e.g., genres, historical styles, text analysis, architecture, decor, sociological and social/political history, performance styles and techniques, etc.)

Personal and Process Skills

1. Demonstrated written and personal communication skills.
2. Demonstrated appropriate collaborative and supervisory skills and personnel management.
3. Demonstrated appropriate planning, fiscal management, and procedural skills.

In addition to the evaluators' direct review of the portfolio of the creative work of the theatre practitioner, the following materials are of significant value in determining the quality of the artistic contributions of the faculty member:

- Written evaluations by professional peers and colleagues in the theatre in the given area of specialization.
- Written evaluations by other professionals in the theatre.
- Written evaluations by members of the production teams, including support personnel.
- Indication of the faculty member's participation in panels or programs for professional societies.
- Evidence of outreach activities, such as symposia, seminars, workshops and other events.
- Copies of adjudication reports or performance responses from regional or national festivals.
- Reviews by professional theatre critics.
- Repeated engagements with off-campus producing organizations as indicative of superior performance for that organization.
- Honors and awards received.

It should be noted that the institution may have different requirements for the dossier depending upon whether the faculty member applying for tenure or for promotion to associate or full professor.

VIII. EXPECTATIONS FOR THEATRE PROFESSORS

The guidelines describing the various faculty positions in a theatre program in higher education deal with the expectations of the discipline. However, the theatre professor needs to be cognizant of the academic and professional expectations of being an educator. Whether at a large research university or a small liberal arts college, each campus will have a formal—and often informal—definition of the role of a faculty or staff member based on the mission of the institution. Candidates should begin to examine that definition, and the strategies for meeting those expectations, as soon as possible. Usually there are three areas of concern to a personnel committee: scholarship, teaching, and service. A fourth area of concern is collegiality, which is becoming more important at campuses across the country. Each educational institution and or department may give differing weight to the importance of these areas—a candidate should understand the ratio.

College and university faculty handbooks are evolving into elaborate procedural guides and are often supplemented by departmental guides. A proactive candidate will seek out these guides and seek mentoring when and where possible. While some campuses have formal mentoring programs, promotion candidates should develop a

network of senior and junior members of the faculty as part of their strategy toward tenure and promotion. Realize that sister disciplines (such as dance, art, or music) may have similar demands on the faculty member's time and also require documentation for creative achievement, so faculty from those disciplines may have insights into dealing with those challenges. The demands of the discipline should not blind the candidate to the need for knowing the expectations at all levels of the personnel review process. When seeking mentorship within or outside of the department, the candidate should always remain in frequent communication with the department chair to maintain a balanced perspective on how the mentor's advice aligns with the department and institutional expectations.

In recent years, what was once a process of demonstrating teaching strategies has moved to a greater focus on student learning and assessment of the student's skills as they progress through an undergraduate or graduate program. In addition to the portfolio of theatre work, some campuses are requiring a teaching portfolio. As candidates prepare lesson plans, develop research agendas, and submit work for peer evaluation, they are obligated to understand the impact of relevant bodies such as the Board of Trustees, the state legislature, the faculty union, as well as the political winds in a state and region on the mission of their campus. A candidate should pursue information and assistance from any formal agency located on campus that supports teaching and learning. An alternative when no formal assistance is provided is to look for or establish a group of faculty that informally deliberates on questions of learning. A mentoring program may exist that brings the expertise of master teachers and/or scholars to junior faculty members. The candidate should also consider a professional reading program that informs him/her of issues concerning higher education. While theatre faculties wish to pursue their art and craft, it must be recognized that the candidate is subject to a unique culture and its requirements—the profession of educator.

IX. TENURE AND PROMOTION CHECK LIST FOR CANDIDATES

The foundation for successful promotion and tenure is established at the time of hire. During the initial interview, the candidate should make certain that he/she knows where the position fits into the academic structure and priorities of the institution. The candidate needs to know:

- What are the specific duties and responsibilities of this job?
- What is the length of the appointment (one year, multi-year, etc.)?
- What is the nature of appointment (fixed term or probationary)?
- What is the contract period: academic (9-month) or annual (10-month, 12-month, etc.)?
- Is any credit for prior service possible and, if so, what is the timeframe in which a decision for tenure will be made?
- Does this position offer pre-tenure sabbatical time?
- What are the salary and benefits?

- Does the position allow for provision of equipment or startup funds or coverage of moving expenses?
- Under what conditions may the contract may be renewed or terminated?

Before accepting an offer:

- Ask the department chair or head of the search committee for a copy of the departmental, school, and divisional criteria for tenure and promotion.
- Talk to other faculty members in the department or school to find out where they are in the process.
- Ask whether the department, school, or division has a mentoring program for probationary appointments.
- Ask whether there is a teaching center that offers support to faculty at the institution.
- Learn everything possible about the climate that prevails at the institution:
 - (i.e. Is creative work valued as research/publication or must one excel at “traditional” measures of academic activity?)
 - What are the expectations for recruiting students?
 - How are department productions evaluated? (As teaching, service or scholarship?).
 - How much time will be allowed off for professional creative activity?
- Use a network to check with professionals, colleagues, ATHE and USITT members, students, and alumni to learn as much as possible about the institution.

Once one is hired and begins the job:

- Review criteria for retention, promotion, and tenure.
- Determine how teaching is evaluated in the department.
- Invite colleagues to observe and give feedback on teaching.
- Participate in team teaching projects if possible; make use of the teaching center’s services.
- Document changes and innovations in new courses or new approaches to existing courses.
- Document success of students in departmental activities, as well as those outside the department (i.e., summer festivals, community, and other areas outside the college or university).
- Develop collegial relationships outside the department.
- Stay advised of all department, college, school and university policies and adhere to those policies – especially FERPA restrictions, policies on ethics and sexual harassment, and safety in the classroom and theatre facilities.
- Seek regular periodic evaluations from individuals or committees that are charged with evaluating progress and making decisions regarding retention, promotion and tenure.
- Retain a file of evaluations. If they are verbal, make timely written notes and send a copy to the chair or head of the evaluation committee.
- Determine format required by the institution for curriculum vita and create one.

- Retain the following for use in the retention, promotion and tenure file:
 - Course syllabi
 - Comprehensive chronological list of courses taught, committee assignments, productions and your participation in them, articles, reviews, conferences, workshops attended, workshops given
 - List of guest lectures or workshops given for other departments, schools, and community organizations
 - Successful student projects/designs/production books
 - Positive communications from students/alumni
 - Production materials demonstrating creative contributions: production photographs and audio, video, or electronic recordings of performance, renderings, models, schedules, budgets, production programs
 - Professional development activities
 - Letters of commendation or appreciation for service performed
- Request that the department invite off-campus peers to review and evaluate creative work and teaching.
- Determine whether the department values reviews from outside the institution; retain if appropriate.
- Be certain to understand the schedule for making personnel decisions.
- Be certain to know who is charged with making personnel decisions.
- When the formal review process begins, request either formal or informal mentor to advise in preparation of materials and presentation of the dossier.

X. THEATRE SPECIALIST PAGES

A. On the Nature of Academic Appointments in Theatre

In the following section, ATHE provides “specialist pages” based on many of the job titles often found in theatre departments. Each specialist page has a brief, generic description of a specialty and the fundamental knowledge and skills the job requires. This list is not exhaustive or exclusive but represents the most common and widely used terms in the field of theatre in higher education. The specialist pages are meant to supplement the material in sections VII and VIII.

It must be stressed that it is common for a faculty member in theatre to perform several roles in a department. The smaller the institution, the more likely it is that one person will perform several roles as a teacher and artist. Some of these roles may be consistent with the faculty member’s training or professional preparation; other roles may be temporary, less familiar, or contingent upon another faculty member’s temporary reassignment or absence.

It is essential that theatre faculty and administrators understand and agree upon how such various and overlapping responsibilities will be assessed and what effect they will have on the tenure/ promotion process. Many institutions schedule annual meetings between individual faculty and department administrators to discuss the workload assignment for the following year and make explicit how the faculty