

Handling Negative Evaluations: Background & Implementation Guidance

This supplemental material offers helpful background information and implementation guidance for those looking for additional support.

What about legitimate negative evaluation? Negative evaluations (and exit interviews)

This section includes handling negative teaching evaluations that might emerge for any of the following categories or review-stages:

- Tenure track and term faculty
- Tenured faculty – not tied to promotion
- Promotion to full professor
- Exit interview

These guidelines are designed to assist institutions to create equitable and compassionate procedures that ultimately minimize the impact of negative evaluations and promote career advancement for each faculty member while achieving effective teaching outcomes and institutional efficiency. It is essential for the institution to regularly assess and adapt their evaluation policies to foster a supportive, diverse, and inclusive academic environment.

This implementation guide is to be used in conjunction with the following documents from the [Negative Evaluation tools](#) including: [Addressing Weaknesses](#), Addressing Insufficient Progress, Improvement Plan Benchmarks, Handling Failed Promotion to Full, Managing Separation.

For Tenure track and term faculty. Consider actions 1 & 2 before designing or implementing training and assessment actions 3 – 5.

Action item		Can occur through...	People to include
1	Prepare a clear rubric for when and how to integrate negative evaluations in tenure track or term faculty reviews.	Draft a rubric. Create opportunities for evaluators to review the rubric, gathering and integrating feedback. Program/committee chairs might need a separate review workshop from individual departments.	Dean of Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee and/or assessment committee Chairs Department members
2	Provide training for peer evaluators to interrupt Bias in peer evaluations.	Offer workshops for potential/designated peer evaluators.	Dean of Faculty Tenure and Promotions committee Peer Evaluators
3	Train department chairs to identify poor performance	Offer workshops for chairs	Dean of Faculty

	standards at early stages to apply correction and support.		Tenure and Promotion committee and/or Assessment Committee
4	Educate tenure-track and term faculty members on addressing negative evaluations. These sessions will help diminish unnecessary frustrations and future conflict.	Offer information sessions for new faculty	Dean of Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee and/or Assessment Committee
5	Measure the % of positive evaluations (number of candidates with positive evaluations) compared to prior years.	Assign clear responsibility and tracking mechanism as actions 1 & 2 begin to efficiently and systematically launch this assessment process at every annual review.	Dean of Faculty Assessment Committee Department Chairs

For negative evaluations of tenured faculty when not tied to promotion cycles. Consider action 1 before designing or implementing training and assessment actions 2 – 5.

Action item		Can occur through...	People to include
1	Offer workshops and training on post-tenure review procedures.	In-person or online training modules	Dean of Faculty Chairs Faculty members
2	Provide an initial meeting to share the negative performance review	One-on-one meeting	Chair Faculty member
3	Structure time for the faculty member to develop an improvement plan.	One-on-one meetings, peer support (classroom observations, teaching squares), workshops (either teaching centers, ACS, or national) and independent work.	Faculty member Chair Department/peer members Teaching/Learning Center
4	Discuss, clarify and confirm the improvement plan, ideally within 1-2 months post-evaluation.	One-on-one meeting	Faculty member Chair
5	Schedule and hold follow-up meetings in appropriate intervals to confirm progress	One-on-one meeting (or small group meeting)	Dean of Faculty Department Chair Faculty member

For negative evaluations of tenured faculty at promotion to full professor. Consider building resource(s) for actions 1, 6 and 7 (and reviewing the resources with Tenure and Promotions committee and all chairs) before the experience of needing to deliver negative feedback arises. Then, the action steps 2-5 can be implemented towards an individual's next annual review and/or next opportunity to apply for promotion to full professor.

Action item		Can occur through...	People to include
-------------	--	----------------------	-------------------

1	Workshop/training on the review process, including appeal procedures	In-person or online training modules	CAO/Dean of Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee and/or Assessment Committee Chair Faculty members
2	Allow time for faculty members to grieve and recover from a negative review!	Determined by faculty member Provide assistance on request.	CAO/Dean of Faculty Chair Faculty member
3	Develop a clear explanation of why promotion was denied. In some cases, this involves detective work and requesting/providing candid feedback.	One-on-one meeting with appropriate administrators	CAO/Dean of Faculty Chair Faculty member Ombudsperson
4	Review options for an appeal. (Note – varies by institution, procedural timeline and restrictions)	One-on-one meeting	CAO/Dean of Faculty Faculty member Chair
5	Decide next steps	Independent work and one-on-one meeting (as requested)	Chair Faculty member
6	Review rubrics and cases to determine clarity of expectations and areas for improvement. Note – can occur with an unsuccessful candidate after such rubrics exist at institution level. The rubric can be used at subsequent annual reviews.	To develop such a rubric, consider a retreat or multi-stakeholder meeting. To implement use of such rubric during negative evaluation process, use one-on-one meetings as requested.	CAO/Dean of Faculty Assessment Committee and/or Tenure and Promotion Committee Chair
7	Annually, train all faculty who are considering applying for promotion. Cover specifics of the review process, including appeals procedures. Feedback rubrics can be introduced at this time.	Training workshop(s) annually Continue to offer information sessions prior to application for any promotion	CAO/Dean of Faculty Tenure and Promotions Committee Chairs Faculty members considering/apply for promotion

For Exit interviews. This sequence is drawn from and designed to be used with the Exit Interview resource in the Negative Evaluation and Exit Interviews portion of the Toolkit. Action steps 1- 2 prepare institutions for introducing new or evaluating existing exit interview processes; action steps 3 – 4 implement an exit interview process and a data analysis process towards continuous improvement; and actions steps 5 – 7 are intended to become routinely integrated into the annual review process (including routine faculty separations – both voluntary and involuntary – from the community).

Reminder that an Exit Interview Process might already exist for staff or administration, one that could be adapted towards use with faculty separations.

Stages to consider if building an exit process:

Action item		Can occur through...	People to include
1	Inform Chairs about the intention to build or to evaluate and improve an Exit Interview process including the timeline, points at which they will have input, and how data will be used over time. Seek their input.	Annual chair retreats First and/or Fall faculty conference Department meetings	CAO/Dean of Faculty Assessment committee/Institutional research Chair Faculty members
2	Prepare a set of questions to gather information from departing faculty member(s). Share draft questions with departments and faculty. (Aim to seek both objective and complex or narrative responses, even for questions such as "What is/are the reason(s) for leaving the institution?" and "Is there anything that could have been done that would have kept you from seeking other employment?")	Gather ideas for questions from each department during departmental meetings. Continue to clarify potential uses for data as questions are refined.	CAO/Dean of Faculty Chairs Assessment Committee and/or Institutional Research Department members Ombudsperson Human Resources
3	Conduct Exit Interviews.	Individual meetings with the specific faculty member(s) involved.	Human Resources
4	Discuss relevant information gathered during exist interviews with corresponding departments with the goal of improving current systems and practices.	Tenure and Promotion Committee meetings Chair meetings	CAO/Dean of Faculty Assessment Committee/Institutional Research Chair(s) Ombudsperson
5	Develop and maintain a system for record keeping.	Record information gathered during each exit interview. (Review process annually)	CAO/Dean of Faculty Chairs Institutional Research and/or Data Services Human Resources
6	Develop assessment tools.	Develop a system to quantify and/or compare information from the exit interviews over time. (Review process annually)	CAO/Dean of Faculty Institutional Research and/or Data Services
7	Review assessment procedures.	Review the data to evaluate the process itself – consider value of findings compared to time invested, comprehensiveness of	CAO/Dean of Faculty Assessment Committee Institutional Research and/or Data Services

		data as an indicator of the system's effectiveness, etc. Iteratively revise as needed.	Human Resources
--	--	--	-----------------