



Faculty Appointment, Salary, Promotion, Tenure (ASPT) Standards

Approved by the Department of Mechanical Engineering Faculty June 10th, 2026
Approved by the College Faculty Status Committee (CFSC) and Effective June 11th, 2026

This document outlines the Appointment, Salary, Promotion, and Tenure (ASPT) Standards for faculty members within the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Overall, the document is in alignment with guidelines established by Illinois State University (ISU) Faculty Appointment, Salary, Promotion, and Tenure (ASPT) Policies, in effect as of June, 2026, and the College of Engineering Faculty ASPT Standards, in effect as of June, 2026.

In accordance with ISU Faculty ASPT Policies, the term "faculty" in this document pertains to individuals holding full-time tenured or probationary tenure-track positions at ISU, bearing the titles of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor. The Department of Mechanical Engineering will strive to implement a faculty assessment and remuneration framework that fosters the highest level of professional engagement and collaboration among its faculty members. As the department is in its foundational years (until 2030), this document may be updated regularly (as per Section 6) to reflect the department's evolving needs and priorities.

1. Department Faculty Status Committee (DFSC)

The DFSC is composed of two elected tenured faculty members and the Department Chair. The Department Chair serves as the DFSC chair. In the foundational years, the DFSC may consist of elected tenured faculty members from other colleges at ISU. The DFSC members shall be elected by tenure-line faculty for staggered two-year terms. All members must meet the qualifications specified in the up-to-date ASPT policies of ISU.

1.1. DFSC Election Policies and Procedures

The DFSC election occurs annually during the spring semester for the subsequent academic year. DFSC members elected in the spring assume their responsibilities on July 1st of the same calendar year. The election will use paper ballots. Tenure-line faculty members who are either nominated by their faculty colleagues (and willing to serve) or self-nominated will appear on the ballot, but names of those on sabbatical will not. Each eligible faculty member may cast one vote for each open position. Faculty requesting absentee voting must write to the Department Chair before the voting begins.

Elected DFSC members can serve two consecutive terms. After four consecutive years of service, a faculty member will not be eligible to serve on the DFSC for one year. Any DFSC member on leave/sabbatical for one or more semesters must vacate their position. The department will conduct special elections to fill such vacancies. Faculty undergoing post-tenure, promotion, or annual review will excuse themselves, when the DFSC meets to discuss their dossier.

The DFSC will develop policies for appointment, reappointment, performance evaluation, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review. These policies require a simple majority of department faculty for approval. The Department Chair will distribute the approved policies to all faculty.

2. Faculty Appointment and Evaluation Policies

The DFSC shall review all the materials submitted for appointment, reappointment, performance evaluation, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review in accordance with the procedures outlined in the ISU ASPT Policies. Although the Department Chair is part of the DFSC and contributes to DFSC review, the Department Chair shall have the authority to perform an independent evaluation.

2.1. Faculty Appointment and Reappointment Policies

The appointment of new probationary tenure track or tenured faculty members shall be conducted in compliance with department, college, and ISU policies. The Department Chair plays a pivotal role in this process, providing leadership and making recommendations based on departmental needs and expertise. For each

open position, the Department Chair shall form a Search Committee that includes tenure-track faculty within the department and at least one ISU faculty external to the department. The Department Chair shall serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the Search Committee. Throughout the search process, the Department Chair will keep the Dean fully informed.

Reappointment is consistent with ISU's ASPT policy. All full-time faculty members will be evaluated annually by the DFSC. Annual letters from the DFSC shall address whether the faculty member has demonstrated satisfactory performance in teaching, research, and service. Further, where appropriate, the letter shall also address the specific recommendation about reappointment. For Assistant and Associate Professors, the letter shall also address the candidate's strengths and weaknesses pertaining to their progress toward future promotion and tenure recommendations.

2.2. Evaluation of Annual Productivity

Faculty will have dynamic workloads, allowing variations in the weighting of teaching, research, and service responsibilities for the purpose of annual evaluation. Typically, for full-time faculty, the weighting is 50-75% for teaching, 20-35% for research, and 5-15% for service, totaling 100%. These ranges are for faculty engaged in satisfactory research productivity as well as fulfilling assigned service responsibilities, though they may change based upon funded grants or approved internal initiatives. Further, these weightings may vary based on departmental needs and priorities during the foundational years of the college (e.g., higher service responsibilities). These variations will be negotiated between individual faculty member and the Department Chair. Each January, the Department Chair and the faculty member will meet and agree on the weighting factors for the previous calendar year.

The annual evaluation process considers individual contributions to teaching quality, research productivity, and service activities. The DFSC will evaluate the faculty members' performance considering both quality and quantity, scoring each of the three areas on a 0 to 5 scale. These raw scores will be used to calculate a summative merit score (0 to 5 scale) based on the exact weighting factors chosen by faculty member. Faculty members will submit annual productivity reports

supplemented with evidence of accomplishment for each of the three areas. The criteria for evaluation are described below.

2.2.1. **Teaching** enhancement efforts, learning promotion, and student engagement outside the classroom. Satisfactory performance includes demonstrated engagement in the continuous improvement process and evolution of teaching in accordance with trends in their evaluations and feedback. Faculty members are expected to review student feedback and include it in the annual report, along with any additional evidence of teaching effectiveness. Faculty members may address additional criteria assessing teaching effectiveness through contributions that may include, but are not limited to:

- Development of new courses or labs
- Supervision of credit-bearing undergraduate student projects (e.g., capstone and independent study)
- Evidence of teaching innovation

2.2.2. **Research**, including publications, conference presentations, external peer reviews of scholarship, externally sponsored work, and intellectual property.

Contributions may include, but are not limited to:

- Peer reviewed journal articles
- Conference presentations
- Internal and external grant proposal submissions
- Funded research contracts
- University-sponsored patent applications
- Supporting evidence of additional accomplishments in scholarship and research

Satisfactory performance includes output aligned with the tenure and promotion criteria listed in Section 3.

2.2.3. **Service** to the department, College, University, profession, and community, reflecting a commitment to shared responsibilities. Satisfactory performance includes collaborative service on departmental, college-level and university-level committees as per the assignment letter. Faculty members may

address additional criteria assessing service through contributions that may include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting student recruitment and retention efforts
- Engagement with student professional societies and/or advisement of student organizations
- Serving as a reviewer for journals and/or funding agencies
- Serving on committees for professional societies
- Community engagement

Although annual evaluation of faculty productivity can provide a measure of a faculty member's effectiveness, it does not provide a measure of a faculty member's capacity and readiness for tenure and promotion. However, annual evaluation must specifically comment on a faculty member's progress towards tenure and promotion.

On receiving their evaluation letter, a faculty member can request a review meeting with the DFSC within five business days. The DFSC merit scores will inform the Department Chair's recommendations for union-negotiated merit raises.

3. Pre-Tenure, Tenure, Post-Tenure, and Promotion Policies

Tenure is a critical step for career progress. Tenure decisions will follow College and ISU policies. Faculty undergo a pre-tenure review in their fourth year of appointment, for which, they are required to submit a narrative that summarizes their accomplishments in teaching, research productivity, and service. The DFSC shall evaluate the progress toward tenure.

The DFSC and Department Chair will review the dossiers of faculty applying for promotion and/or tenure. This comprehensive review includes an assessment of teaching, research, and service contributions using the criteria listed below. To ensure impartial evaluation, the Department Chair will solicit external letters of review, pursuant to Section 10 in the College of Engineering ASPT Standards. The assessment for "Founding" faculty members shall place a higher emphasis on curriculum and laboratory development as well as departmental service during the foundational years.

While the criteria below establish necessary conditions for promotion and tenure consideration, satisfaction of these criteria does not automatically constitute sufficient grounds for promotion and tenure. Additionally, candidates for tenure and promotion must demonstrate a sustained record of collaborative service and professionalism (e.g., collegiality).

3.1. Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor

Candidates must show a strong record of effective teaching, which includes most of the following:

- Effective teaching MEC and EGR courses at different levels
- Contribution to curriculum development, lab development, and/or lab manual development
- Demonstrated reflection and adjustment of coursework in response to patterns in student evaluation
- Student mentoring (e.g., independent studies, capstone projects)
- Teaching innovations

Candidates must show a strong record of research productivity (including research) which includes most of the following:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles, averaging one or more per year; or conference proceedings, averaging two or more per year. Articles and proceedings must be in reputable publications
- Oral presentations at reputable conferences, averaging one or more per year
- Regular submission of grant proposals as principal investigator (PI) or co-principal investigator (co-PI); averaging one or more external grant proposal per year, and one or more internal grant proposals (e.g., University Research Grant, FIREbird) every two years
- Engagement with industry partners through contracts, grants or capstone projects
- An effective record of securing external funding in support of an ongoing research agenda. Evidence of such activity should include service as PI and/or co-PI on externally funded projects sponsored by federal agencies, state agencies, foundations, or industries. The level, scope, and frequency of funded activity shall be evaluated in the context of the norms, opportunities,

and expectations at comparable departments in their foundational stages at R2 institutions.

Finally, candidates must show a strong record of service, both within ISU and outside, e.g., departmental committees, college committees, conference committees, standards committees, editor/reviewer roles, etc. Serving as external grant proposal panelists/reviewers will be considered as an impactful outcome.

3.2. Promotion to Professor

In addition to the expectations outlined in Section 3.1, candidates must meet below expectations:

- Evidence of teaching innovations in tune with the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) and/or the ISU's Center for Integrated Professional Development
- Funding from competitive agencies and/or industry
- A steady publication record in high-impact peer-reviewed journals within the faculty member's field, averaging at least one annually
- Publications as the corresponding author in peer-reviewed journals within the faculty member's field
- Effective supervision of student research (with an emphasis on engineering students) leading to student co-authored papers
- Professional service contributions at a substantial level such as serving as associate editors, chairs of conference general committees and technical program committees, etc.

3.3. Post-Tenure Review

Post-tenure review can occur in several ways, in accordance with Section X of ISU's ASPT policies. Tenured faculty are evaluated annually for the purpose of accountability and for assessment of merit relative to salary raises. Faculty members who receive an unsatisfactory overall performance rating (as defined in Section 2.2) during the annual evaluation process for any two years of a three-year period are required to undergo a cumulative post-tenure review. Tenured faculty members may also voluntarily submit their dossiers for a cumulative post-tenure review at certain junctures of their careers.

4. Recusal Policy

To ensure unbiased evaluation, faculty members shall recuse themselves from ASPT deliberations involving themselves or involving individuals for whom they cannot offer an unbiased opinion. Faculty members may also request a DFSC member to recuse themselves from their deliberations pursuant to Section II.I.B in the ISU ASPT policies. In cases where the number of eligible faculty limits recusal feasibility, the Department Chair will consider alternative measures to maintain impartiality in the evaluation process, following University policies.

5. Faculty Rights

The evaluation process should facilitate developmental feedback, align expectations with our mission, and encompass both intermediate progress and final outcomes. The Department Chair and each individual faculty member will meet at the beginning of each academic year to set expectations and goals and establish a clear connection between year-end evaluations and these expectations/goals, in accordance with departmental, college and university guidelines and workload policies. The evaluation process should be consistent, fair, and transparent, fostering an environment of growth and excellence.

6. Revision and Approval

These standards are subject to periodic review by the Faculty of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Changes must be voted on and approved by a simple majority of the department faculty.