Research Faculty Promotion Process
Instructions

Faculty Affairs (FA) oversees the Research Faculty Promotion Process at the Institute level. The compilation of promotion packages, however, happens at the unit level. The unit processes may vary in their requirements and deadlines, and as such all candidates should work closely with their unit representatives when initiating applications for promotion. Faculty Affairs encourages all potential candidates to do the following well in advance of seeking promotion:

☐ Review the website for Research Faculty Promotions
☐ Review the guidelines for promotion in the faculty handbook
☐ Consult with the appropriate unit-level representative(s)
☐ Prepare (and consistently update) a CV in the standard format

GTRI has an excellent website detailing their promotion process which includes examples of CVs for every level, descriptions of the different titles and links to other valuable resources. Candidates are encouraged to visit this site as well, keeping in mind that there may be slight variations of the process for research faculty in academic units or units reporting directly to the EVPR’s office.

A general description of the promotion process follows. Again, this may vary slightly depending on the unit, and unit representatives are encouraged to keep in close contact with the EVPR office to determine the best order of events. While not all units include a letter at each of the levels listed below, a minimum of 3 letters are required.

1. A candidate, in consultation with his or her direct supervisor, submits a CV to the unit to be considered for promotion.
2. For promotion to the Principal level, the unit seeks at least three (3) external letters of recommendation. These letters should be included in the promotion package for the peer review committee evaluation process.
3. The unit convenes a peer review committee to evaluate the candidate and make a recommendation to the unit director. The members of this committee should be of at least an equal, and preferably a higher, rank than the candidate. The committee’s recommendation and rationale are communicated to the unit director in a formal letter.
4. The unit director adds his or her recommendation, also in a formal letter, to the candidate’s package.
5. A higher-level committee reviews the candidate’s package and makes a recommendation to the executive at the dean or director level. In academic departments, this is a college-level committee; in Interdisciplinary Research Centers the committee is convened by the EVPR office; and GTRI has a standing committee for this purpose. The committee’s recommendation and rationale are communicated to the dean or director in a formal letter.
6. An executive at the dean or director level adds his or her written recommendation to the package.
7. Units then submit their candidates’ completed promotion packages to Faculty Affairs office, for distribution to the Institute Committee.
8. The Institute Committee reviews and votes on each package. Their recommendations go to the Executive Vice President for Research, who then makes a recommendation to the President of the Institute.

9. The President makes a final decision, which is then communicated in writing to the candidate and distributed via the Faculty Affair’s office to the candidate’s unit.

Important Notes

- Candidate profile page in PROMOTE should be reviewed and approved by the Research Faculty Coordinator prior to any unit level review.

- The backbone of this process is ensuring that candidates meet institutional standards for promotion, and the promotion packet and the committee/individual letters should reflect that. If there are any special circumstances that do not allow the candidate to fully explain their work (such as confidentiality agreements or classified projects), we recommend that documentation be included to note these circumstances, either in the summary page, CV, or through an external letter of recommendation as appropriate.

- As a best practice, units should refrain from communicating vote counts and/or feedback to the candidates once the formal process has begun.

- Please keep in mind committees are not limited to tenure track faculty; members can be comprised of non-tenure track faculty, research faculty and faculty outside of the specific unit.

- As a result of the process outlined above, packets generally contain 3-4 letters supporting the relevant votes by the time they reach the institute level. Any “no” votes or split votes (greater than 25% of the committee votes differently than the rest of the group) must be accompanied by a letter detailing the various rationales behind the vote. In general, the Institute does not dictate at which levels these letters are written (i.e. Dean or Director); however at least 3 formal letters are required, even in support of a “yes” vote.

- Research Associates/Technologists and Extension Professionals may want to include documentation, in the form of a simple matrix, which reflects how they meet promotion criteria in the context of their specific job functions. A sample can be found at https://webwise.gtri.gatech.edu/files/media/pst/Swank.pdf and a template is attached.

- If units are requesting any additional salary increase it is best to submit that request at the same time as the promotion packet. This letter will not be enclosed with the promotion packet, and additional salary increase decisions will be made separately from promotion decisions. The additional increase will be processed after the initial 6% raise. For example, if a unit requests an additional 4% for a candidate, it will not be processed as 10% increase. The increase will be 6%, immediately followed by 4% of the new total. Every effort will be made to process both increases on the same day. A template salary increase letter is attached.

Packages for the 2019-2020 promotion cycle are due to CoE Dean’s Office by October 28, 2019.