

Teaching Peer Review Process. School of Mathematics

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**Acknowledgment:** This document is a revision of earlier documents written by Don Estep and Carl Spruill, previous DOTE's of the School of Mathematics at Georgia Tech.

The Director of Teaching Effectiveness, DOTE, is here to facilitate the success of faculty members in their roles as educators. The DOTE is mainly concerned with untenured Faculty, but can of course provide support also for tenured Faculty, Post Doctoral fellows, and Visitors. Still, this document refers to the typical course of action required of untenured Junior Faculty, and the role of the DOTE in this regard.

There are two main purposes of the activities:

1. The first is development, to give faculty members the information and guidance they need to develop and improve their teaching skills.
2. The second is to aid in the documentation of the faculty member's teaching skills and accomplishments.

The following calendar lays out the basic schedule for a typical tenure-track Faculty appointment at the Assistant Professor level, whereby the Faculty typically seeks Promotion and Tenure after having completed 5 years at Georgia Tech. For Junior Faculty with years of prior credit, as well as for Senior Faculty on an accelerated track towards tenure, appropriate adjustments to this calendar are needed.

The Year refers to year on campus teaching.

Year	Purpose	Faculty Involved	Action
1 & 2	Development	FA, DOTE	Create & maintain a teaching file
3	Evaluation	FA, DOTE, Jr P&T	Formal evaluation of teaching
4 to Tenure	Development	FA, DOTE	Maintain teaching portfolio
Tenure	Evaluation	FA, DOTE, Jr P&T	Formal evaluation of teaching

**Faculty Advisor.**

A key ingredient of the peer review process is input by experienced Faculty. Evaluation and counseling activities will be performed by one Faculty Advisor, FA, chosen by the candidate in consultation with the DOTE.

During the development stages, the main activity is to refine teaching skills of the candidate, as needed. Initially, the FA will make an assessment of the candidate's teaching skills by observing a lecture, examining course-related materials, and discussions with the candidate. A report of the class visit by the FA will be filed with the DOTE. If it turns out that the candidate already has a sufficient level of skill, then the FA will simply serve as a source of technical advice according to the need of the candidate. If the FA identifies potentially significant problems and weaknesses with the teaching of the candidate, then the FA, the candidate, and the DOTE, will work out a plan for fixing these, and the FA will work with the candidate and the DOTE to execute the plan.

During the evaluation stages, the FA will furnish input toward a formal evaluation of the candidate's teaching. Typically, the FA will be part of the 3rd year "Teaching Subcommittee" of the candidate. To gain a wider perspective for the evaluation, it is recommended that also a second Faculty, in addition to the FA,

be part of the Teaching Subcommittee. This additional Faculty member should be chosen in consultation with the Jr P&T Committee.

### Year by Year Details

#### 1. Development stage during the first two years

The first development stage will concentrate on matters directly related to curricular activities such as lecturing, class work, grading, etc.

During the first year:

1. By the end of the third week of classes, the DOTE will:
  - (a) Review the syllabus, exam and course work schedule for the courses taught by the candidate.
  - (b) Select, in consultation with the faculty member, a FA.
2. By approximately the tenth week of classes, the FA will
  - (a) Review at least one exam/class assignment prior to the date it is given to students, with regards to difficulty and suitability with respect to the course material. Review the grading scheme along with the results for at least one exam or course assignment.
  - (b) Conduct a peer review of a lecture, by sitting in the class, and then discuss the results with the candidate. Standard format for the peer review lecture is given by pages 7,8,9,10 of the *Guideline for Teaching Review*, available at  
<http://www.math.gatech.edu/resources/internal/DOTE/evalform.pdf>
3. At the end of each term, the FA will review final exams before they are given, for difficulty and completeness, and then review the final grading scale and grade history for all classes.
4. After the student opinion surveys for the first term become available, the DOTE and the candidate will make a long term plan for development if necessary. The DOTE will help the candidate execute the plan and monitor the progress that is made.
5. At the end of the year,
  - (a) The DOTE will prepare a short report summarizing the evaluations made during the year, the development activities that took place, and the progress made. The report will be well supported by evidence.
  - (b) The candidate will put together a teaching portfolio for the year including exams, class materials, student evaluations, etc.. Usually, the candidate will hold on to this material, but the candidate may ask the DOTE to hold on to it until tenure.

**During the second year:** The schedule for the second year depends on the results of the first year. In addition to continuing any long term plan for development, the following activities will take place:

1. The FA will review the syllabus, course plan, and exam and course work schedule for any courses that the candidate is teaching for the first time.
2. The FA will review the final grading scale and grade history for all classes.
3. The candidate will continue putting together a teaching portfolio for the year including exams, class materials, student evaluations, etc..

#### 2. Evaluation stage during year 3

During this year, the candidate will undergo a thorough review from the Jr P&T Committee, and teaching performance is an integral part of such review.

The FA and the other Faculty member chosen in consultation with the Jr P&T Committee will form the 3rd year Teaching Subcommittee of the candidate. They will review all syllabi, exams, class assignments, grading policies, and class evaluations. They will eventually produce a document to be distributed to the Jr P&T Committee and to the DOTE, where they will outline all aspects related to teaching of the candidate. The DOTE will also write a letter to the Jr P&T about the candidate's progress in teaching. The Teaching

Subcommittee document, and the letter from the DOTE, should be one to two pages long, and should comment on all applicable items below.

1. Efforts made by the candidates to develop and improve their teaching skills, and describe the success in doing so. Identify specific improvements that need to be made before tenure, and give specific suggestions for doing so.
2. Summarize student course evaluations and peer evaluations made by the FA. Review Organization of Courses, Preparation of Courses, Examination and Course Work, and Grade Policy.
3. Identify strengths of the candidate and suggest ways these can be used by the School. Comment on particularly noteworthy features of the candidate teaching, such as innovative use of technology, design of new course, or revision of syllabi. This is a good opportunity to identify candidates that should be praised for excellent teaching.

### **3. The second development stage lasting from the fourth year to the tenure decision year**

The form of the second development stage depends on the results of the third year review. If the review identifies serious problems then a development plan will be worked out by the candidate, FA, and DOTE, during the first few weeks of the year following the review. A formal re-review of the candidate will be required before the candidate will be considered for tenure. If, instead, the third year review is positive, then the second development stage will be conducted more informally.

In all cases, the candidate will assemble a teaching portfolio each year that includes samples of exams and class materials, all student evaluations, records of class grades, and the results of any evaluations made by the FA.

During the second development stage, the FA will also encourage and help the candidate to get involved with supercurricular activities such as revising curricula, devising new courses, and advising students. The candidate is encouraged to teach a wide variety of classes and contribute to the curriculum taught in the School of Mathematics during this period; these can be significant ingredients in the tenure package.

### **4. The evaluation made during the tenure decision year**

The tenure year evaluation of the candidate teaching should cover the curricular, supercurricular, and extracurricular activities of the candidate. This evaluation must be completed during the second part of the fall term. In all cases, the candidate will prepare a "Teaching Statement" detailing supercurricular and extracurricular activities and distribute this document to the Jr P&T Committee and the DOTE.

What else will be required depends on the outcome of previous reviews.

A formal "Teaching Subcommittee" review will be required of those candidates who had some serious problems during their third year, or later, reviews. This Committee will again consist of the FA and another Faculty chosen in consultation with the Jr P&T. They will comment on whether the candidate has succeeded/failed to address the concerns raised in previous reviews. They will write a report which will be given to the Jr P&T and the DOTE. A formal "Teaching Subcommittee" review will not be required for candidates who had positive third year, and later, reviews.

In all cases, the DOTE, in consultation with the FA, will review syllabi, exams, class assignments, grading policies, class evaluations, and any educational material developed by the candidate. The DOTE will write a well documented evaluation, one to two pages long, according to the *Guideline for Teaching Review*. In particular, the evaluation will address

1. The curricular activities listed in the review criteria guideline, as outlined on pages 1-6 of the Guideline.
2. Specific supercurricular and extracurricular activities of the candidate as outlined on pages 11,12 of the Guideline.
3. History of the previous years.