COAS Prospectus Process:

Information and Guidance

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

***What is a Prospectus, and what does it do?***

In COAS, the Prospectus is a document authored by a tenured Associate Professor highlighting their plans for scholarship in teaching, service, and research that can lead to a successful application for promotion to Full Professor. The document also includes input from the author’s department Chair and/or T&P Committee to provide disciplinary context and framing for the proposed body of work. The prospectus process serves at least two purposes. First, it should catalyze a healthy conversation between a tenured Associate Professor and their faculty community regarding prospective plans for professional activities and productivity during the next several years, in anticipation of a potential application for promotion to Full Professor three or more years in the future. This dialogue provides an important opportunity for everyone to “get on the same page” and achieve a shared understanding of what might constitute a body of work consistent with a successful application for promotion (or at least one possible path to achieving that goal). Second, the prospectus document serves as tangible evidence of this conversation and represents a concise written record of its outcome that can be reviewed and endorsed by the department and college.

Note that an endorsed prospectus does not constitute a formal contract or agreement such that if a faculty member were to accomplish all of the components of the work described in the prospectus, then the department and college must approve the subsequent application for promotion. Rather, endorsement of the prospectus signifies that the department and college see the proposed body of work as appropriate and supporting the mission and strategic objectives of the department and college, and if accomplished, the department and college would view the body of work favorably in the final “all things considered” evaluation of the author’s application for promotion. Likewise, the author is not bound to the plans described in the prospectus, such that only under those conditions could they be successful. The purpose of the prospectus is to promote clear communication, shared understanding, and useful professional mentoring along the path to a future application for promotion to Full Professor.

***Prospectus Timeline***

* A prospectus must be submitted for COAS review at least three years before the anticipated year of application for promotion (e.g., prospectus submission in fall 2020 for application fall 2023).
* The annual deadline for prospectus submission to COAS is October 15. The Promotion & Tenure committee and Dean will complete their reviews and return prospectuses to authors by no later than February 15.
* Departments may have earlier internal deadlines for departmental review – check with the Dept. Chair and/or consult departmental T&P policy or other guidelines to ensure adequate time for department-level processing and endorsement prior to submission to COAS.

PROSPECTUS DEVELOPMENT

The prospectus contains important input from both the faculty author and their department. This collaborative effort begins with discussions about the anticipated scholarly activities of the author, and it culminates with the author and department each writing specific sections of the prospectus document.

***Guidance for Faculty Authors of a Prospectus***

The development of a prospectus involves two interrelated processes: a) having a “prospectus conversation” with the members of your department and professional community, and b) writing a concise “prospectus document” with both internal (departmental) an external (COAS) audiences in mind. Both the conversation and the document are important, and they serve somewhat different but interrelated purposes.

The most important way for you to produce a successful prospectus is to start by having thoughtful and meaningful conversations with your faculty colleagues and Department Chair about what you plan to accomplish in service, teaching, and research/creative activities in the next several years. It will be important both to let them know about your potential plans and vision for meeting the requirements for promotion, and to listen to their feedback and suggestions. Start this discussion early – ideally at least a few months before the prospectus is due in COAS, so you will have time to formulate ideas, present them to colleagues, get feedback, and reformulate as needed. Although tenured Associate Professors enjoy significant individual freedom and flexibility in the scope and direction of their professional activities, your work still needs to support the shared vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the department, college, and university. Dialogue with colleagues in your department will help calibrate and clarify expectations in both directions.

A successful future application for promotion to Full Professor relies on making plans now that are clear, actionable, evaluable, and soundly justified with respect to promotion criteria of the department, college, and university. Be sure to formulate your plans with these characteristics in mind, and then describe them succinctly in your prospectus document. The *Prospectus Template* contains prompts to highlight these features, so be sure to address each prompt adequately and appropriately (keeping in mind the word limits for each brief statement). And remember ̶ the COAS T&P committee and the Dean are key parts of the audience for the prospectus document. The purpose of their review is not to second-guess the discipline-specific aspects of the proposed work; rather, college-level review is intended to confirm that the prospectus conversation between the author and their department resulted in plans that are clear, actionable, evaluable, and well justified.

***Guidance for Departments (Chairs and/or T&P Committees)***

The department plays two important roles in the development of a post-tenure prospectus, one in relation to the author, and one in relation to the college.

First, with the faculty author, the department should participate constructively in the “prospectus conversation” to help them understand how their proposed plans for scholarship in the next several years align with departmental expectations for promotion (i.e., “setting the bar”), and how it connects with the shared vision, strategic plans, and mission of the department as a whole. Depending on the organizational structure, policy framework, and traditions of the department, this conversation might be facilitated through the Chair, or the P& T Committee, or by other mechanisms. The department should try to respect and support the tenured faculty member’s individual vision, creativity, and freedom to explore possible new directions, on the one hand, and also provide clear feedback about how their proposed work would support and align with the needs of the department and discipline on the other hand. The end result of the prospectus conversation should be a shared understanding between the author and their disciplinary community about the scope and nature of the scholarly work to be achieved in anticipation of a future, potentially successful application for promotion to Full Professor. The outcome of the conversation can then be distilled into the concise text of the prospectus document, endorsed by the department, and submitted to the college for review.

The second role of the department relates to the college. The purpose of COAS review is not to second-guess the discipline-specific aspects of the proposed body of work – instead, college-level review seeks to confirm that the plans represented by the prospectus are clear, actionable, evaluable, soundly justified, and meet promotion criteria established by university policy in ways that are appropriate for the discipline. So, the sections of the prospectus written by the department provide essential discipline-specific context, calibration, and verification of the proposed work to the COAS Promotion & Tenure Committee and the Dean. Keep that audience and their evaluative criteria in mind as you construct the departmental portions of the prospectus document.

Once the prospectus is complete and finalized, including the required input and endorsement by the department, a copy of the document should be signed by the author and appropriate department personnel (Chair and/or T&P Committee Chair). The document then moves on to the college for review.

PROSPECTUS SUBMISSION AND COLLEGE REVIEW

Once a prospectus is finalized and endorsed by the department, it needs to be reviewed for endorsement by the College. The prospectus and a current *Curriculum Vita* of the author should be submitted electronically to the college by October 15, at least three years prior to the anticipated application for promotion. College-level review includes independent evaluation first by the COAS Promotion & Tenure Committee and then by the Dean.

To facilitate review by the COAS Promotion & Tenure committee, the prospectus and accompanying materials may be made available to members of the committee electronically. Authors should be aware that the prospectus is not considered a highly confidential document (unlike the final application for promotion, which is confidential). Once committee review has been completed, prospectuses endorsed by the committee will be passed on to the Dean for final review. Any prospectus not endorsed by the committee will be returned directly to the author, along with comments and suggestions for improvements, keyed to the specific review criteria of the committee: clarity, actionability, evaluability, and soundness of justification.

Dean review constitutes the final step in the college-level evaluation of prospectuses. The Dean has final authority for endorsement and enactment of a prospectus, and following this review step, the prospectus will be returned to the author with any feedback by no later than February 15.

If a prospectus is returned for revision either by the COAS Promotion & Tenure committee, or by the Dean, then the faculty member will be able to revise and resubmit the prospectus for consideration in the next review cycle, the following fall. Note: depending on the specific reasons for non-endorsement, the original timeline for application for promotion may still be in effect, to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

PROSPECTUS REVISION AND RESUBMISSION

If a prospectus is returned to the author for revision, then the revised prospectus can be resubmitted for college review in the fall of the following academic year (i.e., one year after original submission). Revision may or may not affect the anticipated application timeline. Much depends on the nature and extent of the changes needed to receive endorsement. If the author and department agree the work plan of the revised prospectus can still be accomplished on the original timeline, then the revised prospectus can be resubmitted to COAS with the original anticipated application year.

FAQs

1. Is a Prospectus required for promotion?

***Yes. Current COAS policy requires an endorsed prospectus as part of an application for promotion to Full Professor.***

1. If my plans change in the future, can I revise my Prospectus without having to reset my timeline for application?

***Yes, revision without resetting the timeline is possible. It depends on the nature of the revisions needed to achieve endorsement. In general, the timeline is determined through consultation between the author and their department*.**

1. If my area of distinction is something other than traditional scholarship, does the criterion for “National and International reputation” still apply?

***Yes. This requirement comes from university policy, and it applies to all faculty regardless of their chosen area(s) of distinction. So, be sure to include information in your prospectus about how you plan to meet these criteria and to provide supporting evidence of success.***

1. If nothing changes in terms of my plans except for the fact that I do not go up for Full three years after having my prospectus approved, is there a time limit after which I need to resubmit my Prospectus for endorsement by the department and college?

***If a faculty member needs to depart from their original plans or timeline, then the prospectus should be updated to reflect the new conditions. The process is identical to that of prospectus revision.***