METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY℠ OF DENVER

Guidebook for Portfolio Preparation

Prepared by the Office of Faculty Affairs

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Introduction

We designed this guidebook to highlight important aspects of the evaluation process and to provide insight into the process of portfolio preparation. We intended the information, examples, and illustrations contained within this guidebook to help you organize your materials as clearly as possible while adhering to the expectations set forth in the *Faculty Employment Handbook (Handbook)*. We recommend that faculty study the *Handbook*, and for reappointment and tenure, especially, but not limited to, Chapter II: "Category I Faculty – Policies and Procedures." It is important for faculty to understand that department guidelines establish the discipline-specific criteria for evaluation, and it is essential that faculty follow their department guidelines when assembling their portfolios. You can find the department evaluation guidelines on the MSU Denver Watermark FS website. Finally, it is always a good idea to consult with trusted colleagues and peers as research demonstrates that the quality of a portfolio improves with such input (Seldin & Miller, 2009).

Within this document, references to tenure application are referred to as usually, but not always, being on the "normal" clock and that the tenure application is concomitant with the application for promotion to Associate Professor in the sixth tenure-track year. Application for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor may occur in any year permitted by the *Handbook* and no sooner than during the fourth year after promotion to Associate Professor.

About the Portfolio

The evaluation system assumes a “portfolio” model that is intended to encourage reflection and enable faculty to make the strongest evidence-based case for themselves. Portfolios balance consistency by requiring many of the same documents in all portfolios with flexibility by allowing faculty to choose the additional materials for review they wish to add. Faculty should construct their portfolios to demonstrate intentional development and to present who they are as professionals while furnishing representative samples of the work they do as faculty members.

Before starting assembly of the portfolio, consider the following:

Audience: When writing your narrative statement, annotating your Curriculum Vitae, or selecting and framing the additional materials for review, be mindful that your audience will include both peers within your discipline and reviewers (faculty and administrators alike) outside your discipline. You should avoid jargon and acronyms and be explicit in how your work contributes to the University mission and/or to your field.

Content: Portfolios are not intended to present a full account of all the work that you have done in each area of performance. Assembling a portfolio provides an opportunity to put thought and reflection into how you want to present yourself. In The Academic Portfolio, Seldin and Miller (2009) write:

> One of the most significant parts of the portfolio is the faculty member’s self-reflection on his or her teaching, research and scholarship, and service. In truth, it is at the heart of academic portfolio development. It is individual strategic planning, articulation of philosophy and methodology of work, a road map to past achievements and future goals, and a bank of supporting documentation. (p. 31)

You will be making decisions, ideally based on such reflection, about what to annotate in your Curriculum Vitae, how to frame your narrative statement (in the second, third, tenure, Post-Tenure Review (PTR), and promotion portfolios), and what additional materials for review you will include in your third, tenure, and promotion year portfolios.

This *Guidebook* offers information and insight into how to approach many of the decisions that go into portfolio preparation. In addition, we strongly recommend that you take advantage of opportunities for collaboration. Just as you would typically seek peer and colleague feedback on an article prior to submitting it for publication, so too should you ask peers, mentors, and colleagues to read and comment on your

portfolio. Consider looking for colleagues within your department, including your department chair. Ask your mentor or a trusted colleague from outside your department for input. If you have questions, check with your dean's office.

Cumulative nature of the portfolio: The portfolio is intended to be cumulative. This means your Curriculum Vitae, your narratives, and your choice of additional materials in the third, tenure, and promotion years should reflect your cumulative record since your hire, not just since your last review. Especially in your tenure application year, reviewers should come away from reading your portfolio with a strong sense of how you have developed in your professional life during your time at MSU Denver.

About Watermark FS

Watermark FS is the online portfolio tool the University has adopted for faculty to assemble their portfolios. Watermark FS has the capability of streamlining and simplifying the process of assembling your portfolio. The tool pulls data from several sources, including information added by the faculty member, in order to generate the portfolio. It is thus best thought of as an archiving tool, where a faculty member stores evidence of teaching effectiveness (e.g., syllabi, samples of exams or assignments, peer observation results); articles, presentations, and other scholarly or creative contributions; and records of service to the department, college, university, or the community. In addition to data entered by you, the faculty user, some fields are populated with data pushed from other sources, such as teaching assignments and numerical scores and comments from Student Ratings of Instruction (SRI).

We strongly recommend that faculty take full advantage of Watermark FS by inputting data into relevant fields and by uploading pertinent documents on an ongoing basis. Attention to keeping Watermark FS updated throughout the year will pay off considerably when it comes time to "assemble" the portfolio.

All faculty undergoing evaluation for retention, tenure, promotion, or PTR shall submit their portfolios through Watermark FS.

Accessing Watermark FS

You can access the Watermark FS system from the MSU Denver Watermark FS website at msudenver.edu/watermark-fs or from the MSU Denver home page www.msudenver.edu click on the "I am a" and select "Faculty and Staff" link to find access to the "Watermark FS" by scrolling down. On the MSU Denver Watermark FS website, you will find a link to "Log on to Watermark FS." Your login credentials to access Watermark FS are the same as your MSU Denver login credentials. Whenever you login to Watermark FS, you are first brought to the Activities Database Main Menu. From this page, you can access screens to input information and upload relevant files.

Helpful Resources

The MSU Denver Watermark FS website also has many resources to help you prepare your portfolio. To access them click on the "Faculty Resources" link located on the left side of the website. After clicking on the "Faculty Resources" link, an FAQ section and several resources -including tutorials- are listed that will help you with preparing and submitting your portfolio:

- The “Using Watermark FS for Portfolio Preparation and Submission” tutorial provides systematic instructions for preparing and submitting a portfolio using Watermark FS.
- The “Quick Reference Guide to the Watermark FS Screens” tutorial provides information about the type of information that is typically entered on the various screens in Watermark FS.
- The “Running the Stored Files Report” tutorial provides step-by-step instructions for running a report that shows the location of all of the files you currently have stored in Watermark FS. This report also shows which “Portfolio Additional Materials” item number you may have assigned to specific files for your last review.
- The “Departmental Guidelines’ page provides access to each academic department’s evaluation guidelines.

Helpful Suggestions

- Before submitting your final portfolio, remember to check each hyperlink within the report to ensure that it opens properly and is linked to the correct file or Web Address. The “Using Watermark FS for Portfolio Preparation and Submission” tutorial includes information about how to test the hyperlinks.

About Faculty Evaluation

The University evaluates faculty members in three areas of performance: Teaching, Scholarly Activities, and Service. You can find the University definitions of each of these areas in the *Handbook* (Chapter II, C.3.). In addition, for each area of performance we indicate the sources of data upon which evaluative decisions are based.

Be sure also to consult your Department Guidelines for further elaboration and expectations.

Teaching

The sources of data for the review of teaching normally include:

- Narrative
- Additional materials for review
- Student Ratings of Instruction, including student comments from the SRI process
- Previous review letters
- Annotated CV

Note: The portfolio allows faculty members to explicate how their advising activities contribute to the University mission. Unless otherwise stated in Department Evaluation Guidelines, Teaching is the area of the portfolio where faculty should make their advising activities clear.

Scholarly Activities

The sources of data for the review of scholarly activities normally include:

- Annotated CV
- Narrative
- Additional materials for review
- Previous review letters

Note: As is the case for all three areas of performance, the department guidelines spell out expectations for reappointment, tenure, and promotion within the area of scholarly activities.

Service

The sources of data for the review of service normally include:

- Annotated CV
- Narrative
- Additional materials for review
- Previous review letters

The Review Process

Prior to tenure, tenure-track faculty are reviewed annually, though requirements for the portfolio and the levels of review differ from year to year. Except in the first year, faculty submit portfolios in the fall of every year and can include relevant information up to the moment of submission for review. The following table indicates the materials that comprise each year's portfolio and the levels of review. Department guidelines may establish expectations for review activities beyond what we have indicated here, and you should consult them carefully. With the Provost's approval, any participating level of review may request additional materials in any year.

Materials	**CAT II**	**Year 1***	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**	**Tenure & Promotion**	**PTR**	**Promotion**
Annotated CV	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Narrative	X		X	X			X	X	X
Previous Review Letters			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SRIs and Student Comments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reassigned Time Evaluations and Reports (if relevant)			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Additional Materials for Review				X			X		X
Materials Addressing Previous Year's Review+					X	X			

Levels of Review	CAT II	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Tenure & Promotion	PTR	Promotion
Department/Peer Review Committee				X			X	X	X
Department Chair[A]	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
College RTP Committee				X			X		X
Dean	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Faculty Senate RTP Committee				X			X		X
Provost[++]	X++			X			X		X
President							X		
Trustees							X**		

Notes:

* Faculty submit first year portfolios in the spring semester, and thereafter portfolios are submitted annually in the fall, according to the procedural calendar, which may be accessed on the Office of Faculty Affairs website at msudenver.edu/faculty-affairs/procedural-calendar.

** The President is the final authority regarding promotion to Associate Professor, while the Trustees are the final authority regarding granting or denying tenure.

+ If the review letters for the previous year have indicated specific areas of concern that may prevent a successful tenure application, the faculty member will include in the portfolio relevant documentation addressing progress in those areas.

++ For Lecturers, in cases of a recommendation of non-retention or promotion to Senior Lecturer, the Provost will make the final determination. In tenure track years 1, 2, 4, and 5, if the Dean does not reappoint a faculty member, the faculty member may appeal to the University Appeals Committee. The recommendation of the University Appeals Committee, along with the candidate's portfolio, will be reviewed by the Provost, who will make the final decision. In tenure track year 3, if the Provost does not reappoint a faculty member to the next tenure track year, the faculty member may appeal to the University Appeals Committee. The recommendation of the University Appeals Committee, along with the candidate's portfolio, will be reviewed by the President, who will make the final decision.

A In the case of a Department Chair being a candidate for reappointment, tenure, promotion, and/or post-tenure review, the recommendation of a Peer Review

Committee, comprising at least three other Department Chairs appointed by the College/School Dean, will substitute for the recommendation of the Chair. In such cases, the Department Chair will still review the reappointment, tenure, promotion, or post-tenure review portfolios for other candidates within that Department.

Portfolio Components

Annotated Curriculum Vitae (CV), required for

- ***Lecturer***
- ***Tenure-track years 1-5***
- ***Tenure and promotion***
- ***Promotion only***
- ***PTR***

The annotated CV, in conjunction with the narrative, provides your reviewers with the most thorough accounting of your accomplishments. It is one of the primary documents that reviewers will use to evaluate how well you are meeting the expectations set forth in your Department Guidelines.

Watermark FS generates your annotated CV whenever you run reports; the CV does not exist as a distinct document that requires updating. When Watermark FS generates your CV, it pulls information from what you have uploaded into relevant screens.

Annotations may be included to provide additional information helpful to reviewers. For example, you may want to add an annotation to explain that

- A journal in which you have published is considered a top journal in your field either nationally or internationally;
- A conference acceptance process was exceptionally competitive;
- Your contribution to a committee was significant in some specific way; or
- Your implementation of pedagogical innovations, new teaching materials, and student contact with the community.

Annotations are an additional means available to you in order to make the strongest case for your accomplishments, especially in the areas of Scholarly Activities and Service. In addition, you should keep annotations brief—40 words or less per annotation is generally a good target—so as not to detract from the flow of your CV. You will have the opportunity to provide lengthier reflection on your accomplishments in your narrative. Annotate only entries you feel are most relevant to highlight your accomplishments.

You can add annotations about specific course sections you have taught to highlight points about the class. For instructions, see the “Scheduled Teaching” section of the “Quick Reference Guide to the Watermark FS Screens” under the “Faculty Resources” link in the MSU Denver Watermark FS site. Your comments about the class will appear in the “Teaching Field and Assignments” table underneath the course section information.

Narrative, required for

- ***Lecturer***
- ***Tenure-track years 2 and 3***
- ***Tenure and promotion***
- ***Promotion only***
- ***PTR***

Alongside the annotated CV, the narrative provides an encompassing account of your major accomplishments. It, too, is one of the primary documents that reviewers will use to evaluate how well you are meeting the expectations set forth in your Department Guidelines. It is a reflective statement that

1. presents a self-assessment;
2. highlights accomplishments; and
3. indicates plans for the future.

The narrative should present the best case or tell the best story in a way that is acceptable to colleagues within one's own department. However, it must also be comprehensible to other members of the University community, and so it may be that elements that would not require explanation to your closest associates might require a bit more "unpacking," spelling out, or explanation.

Narratives should be cumulative and grow in length from one iteration to the next. Accordingly, length expectations for narratives are as follows (assuming single-spaced documents using a 12-point font):

- second year: 1-3 pages
- third year: 2-5 pages
- Tenure and Promotion years: 3-8 pages
- Post-Tenure Review: 1-3 pages
- Lecturer: 1-2 pages

The narrative should address your professional growth and accomplishments in all three performance areas. It might also illustrate how your work integrates or cuts across the categories of Teaching, Scholarly Activities, and Service. The narrative is where you can highlight your most meaningful and relevant accomplishments. However, it should be more than a catalog or listing of what those accomplishments are. That kind of a catalog is provided in your annotated CV.

Consider your narrative as the chance to tell your story and highlight your accomplishments and future growth plans. The remainder of your portfolio, then, contains the pieces of evidence to support your story. **You should not include any additional materials for review in the third, tenure, and promotion years that you do not mention, explain, or elaborate upon in your narrative. Additionally, you should address SRIs and student comments in your narrative.**

There is no set outline for your narrative. You may choose to organize your statement into the three (3) areas of Teaching, Scholarly Activities, and Service, or you may determine a more effective way to present the story of your continued growth as a faculty member. However, remember that the purpose of the narrative is to present your best case for a positive evaluation relative to your Department's guidelines. Based on your narrative, a reviewer should be able to understand clearly how you have met your Department's requirements. In your single narrative statement that encompasses all three areas of performance, you are advised to explain how your teaching, scholarly activities, and service cross-fertilize each other. While the tone of your narrative is something worth paying attention to, you should avoid trying to sway your reviewers using catch phrases, jargon, or flowery language. Instead, use the same scholarly approach to construct this statement as you would when writing an article for publication. Remember to seek feedback from trusted peers and colleagues when working on your narrative.

Some ideas of what to include in your narrative statement are

- With regard to **Teaching**
  - A brief summary of your teaching philosophy and **specific examples of how you apply it**.
  - A description of your content expertise, as well as a discussion of your ongoing efforts to maintain or expand that expertise.
  - Descriptions of your approach to instructional design, i.e., how you design course objectives, syllabi, materials, activities, and experiences that are conductive to learning.
  - Descriptions of instructional delivery, i.e., how you communicate information clearly, create environments, conducive to learning, and use an appropriate variety of teaching methods.
  - Descriptions of your approach to instructional assessment, i.e., how you design assessment procedures appropriate to course objectives, ensure fairness in student evaluation and grading, and provide constructive feedback on student work.
  - Analysis and conclusions drawn from SRI scores and the student comments.
  - Analysis and conclusions drawn from peer observations.
  - A description or self-assessment of advising provided to students.

- With regard to **Scholarly Activities**
  - Discussion of the puzzles you have been seeking to unravel, the importance of this work to your discipline, and what peer review process you have used or plan to use.

- Discussion of your creative activities, how this work contributes to your discipline, and the type of juried review you will use.
- Discussion of your work in terms of a plan or agenda that includes not only completed works, but also those in progress and any specific plans that you have for future projects.
- If relevant, you are encouraged to highlight how your students have been included in your scholarship through research assistantships, conference presentations, independent studies, directed research, etc.

- With regard to **Service**
  - Description of how you have contributed to the organizational needs and mission of the department, college, or University.
  - Description of effective leadership that you have demonstrated.
  - Description of how your unpaid service to the community connects with your disciplinary expertise.
  - Explanation of how your service integrates with your broader professional interests.

In all performance areas, it is a good idea to include explanation of how your accomplishments contribute to your professional interests and development while meeting the expectations established in your Department Guidelines.

Previous Review Letters, required for

- ***Tenure-track years 2-5***
- ***Tenure and promotion***
- ***Promotion only***
- ***PTR***

Every year beginning in your second, letters from all levels of review from previous years will become part of your portfolio. In Watermark FS, reviewers will add letters, along with their ratings, and those letters will automatically become part of the portfolio. These letters will be found in the Portfolio Cover Sheet screen. You have the option of providing a written response to each letter, within seven calendar days of their posting. See the Procedural Calendar to remain apprised of the posting days.

SRIs and Student Comments, required for

- ***Lecturer***
- ***Tenure-track years 1-5***
- ***Tenure and promotion***
- ***Promotion only***
- ***PTR***

Current SRI data are pushed into Watermark FS and there is no action required by you regarding current SRIs. In your narrative, you are expected to show that you have read, reflected upon, and addressed student comments contained in the SRI evaluations.

Reassigned Time Evaluation(s), required for

- ***Lecturer (Reduced Teaching Load)***
- ***Tenure-track years 2-5***
- ***Tenure and promotion***
- ***Promotion only***
- ***PTR***

Reassigned Time evaluations, including the evaluation narrative, are required in all portfolios (except in the faculty member's first year of appointment) for all faculty who have had reassigned time. For reappointment and tenure, make sure that evaluations have been entered for all reassigned time since your hire. For promotion only, make sure that evaluations have been entered for all reassigned time since tenure. For PTR, make sure that evaluations have been entered for all reassigned time since your most recent major review.

For Lecturers, Reduced Teaching Load evaluations, including the evaluation narrative, are required in all portfolios for all faculty who have had a reduced teaching load.

In Watermark FS, evaluators enter their evaluations on the "Reassigned Time" or "Reduced Teaching Load" screen. See the Watermark FS website at msudenver.edu/watermark-fs and under "Faculty Resources" go to "Reassigned Time Process" for additional information, including tutorials for both faculty members with reassigned time as well as their evaluators.

Additional Materials for Review, required for

- ***Tenure-track year 3***
- ***Tenure and promotion***
- ***Promotion only***

Portfolios in the third, tenure, and promotion years include between four and nine additional materials for review. Of those, at least two additional materials need to be in Teaching, one in Scholarly Activities, and one in Service. You should use your judgment to determine what documents and materials will best characterize your accomplishments in each of the three areas of performance.

The University has not prescribed what constitutes “material for review,” and you have considerable latitude in determining how to organize pieces of evidence into these additional materials. **Appendix 1 lists several options in each performance area**. We do not intend this to be an exhaustive list; we expect that some faculty will include materials for review relevant to their work that are not on this list. Note that material for review is not necessarily a single thing (i.e., one piece of paper, one image). For example, you might choose to “bundle” into a single document two or more examples of exam responses from a course to demonstrate how well your students have mastered a particular learning objective. Alternatively, you might combine the results of two formative peer observations into a single document to demonstrate how your teaching behaviors have changed over time.

In Watermark FS, whenever you upload a document within the relevant screen (usually the “Scheduled Teaching” screen or an appropriate screen under the categories “Scholarship/Research” or “Service”), you have the option of indicating that the document is an additional material for review to be included in the portfolio. A drop-down menu allows you to assign the material a number between 1 and 9. You may indicate more than one document, including documents uploaded to different screens within Watermark FS, as an additional material for review with the same number. In such cases, those documents will be counted as a single additional material for review. In general, you should include multiple documents as a single material for review *only* when they are related and only when, taken together, they make a point that you would not otherwise be able to make. The purpose of the portfolio is *not* to provide a full accounting of your work, but rather to highlight your growth and your most significant accomplishments. Also, remember that any included materials require discussion and explanation in the narrative.

Materials Addressing Previous Year’s Review, required for

- ***Tenure-track years 4-5***

If review letters from either the third or fourth year indicate specific areas of concern that may prevent a successful tenure application you must include relevant documentation addressing progress in such areas, in the following year (year 4 or 5).

There is no prescribed format for this additional documentation. In most cases, a brief detailed letter explaining your progress in the area of concern will be appropriate. Relevant documentation may also include such items as revised syllabi, article drafts, acceptance letters, etc.

If you are including such additional materials in your fourth- or fifth-year portfolio, upload them to the Portfolio Narrative screen under “Materials Addressing Previous Years’ Reviews (fourth- and fifth-Year Faculty Only-as applicable).”

Submission of Portfolio for Review

It is important to distinguish between the data that reside within Watermark FS database (whether you have uploaded those data, or the Office of Institutional Research has imported them) and your portfolio that you submit for review. Your evaluation will be based only on the information and materials that exist within your portfolio and not on the (generally) broader range of materials and information that resides within Watermark FS. Your final steps for portfolio preparation, thus, will consist of generating your portfolio report, reviewing and saving that report, and then uploading it to Watermark FS from where your reviewers will access it.

To run and submit your portfolio report, please follow the instructions for "Using Watermark FS for Portfolio Preparation and Submission" found in the Watermark FS page under "Portfolio Process," available from the Faculty Resources page of the Watermark FS Web site, msudenver.edu/watermark-fs.

You have now completed your portfolio preparation and have submitted it to the area in Watermark FS where your reviewers will be able to access it and provide their evaluation. Congratulations!

Appendix 1

Additional Materials for Review in third, tenure, and promotion Portfolios

Portfolios in the third, tenure, and promotion years will include:

- A *minimum of 4 additional materials for review* chosen from the list below or similar, appropriate items: at least 2 additional materials from the Teaching category and at least 1 additional material from each of the Scholarly Activities and Service categories.
- A *maximum of 9 total additional materials for review* from the list below or similar, appropriate items.
- Additional materials are not required for tenure-track years 1, 2, 4, and 5 or PTR portfolios.

The following is a list of what additional materials for review in your portfolio might be:

Teaching

- Formative peer observations
- Sample syllabi from selected course(s) (goal is to demonstrate focus on course planning, pedagogy, and intentional assessment designed to demonstrate student learning of articulated outcomes)
- Other materials that document curriculum development
- Other instructional materials, such as assignments, classroom assessment techniques, or other evidence of student learning
- Teaching awards, fellowships or honors
- Letters of recommendation written for students
- Letters of appreciation written by students or alumni
- Advising assessment findings (whether gathered by department, program, or individual faculty member)
- Other documentation aligned with department guidelines

Scholarly Activities

- Publications
- Manuscripts—in press or under review
- Artifacts from creative activities, such as videos, slides, audio recordings, performance texts, photographs, musical scores, publicity, and reviews
- Presentations at professional meetings or invited presentations
- External grant proposals--under review, funded or un-funded
- Invited presentations
- Related awards, fellowships, honors
- Referee work for journals, exhibits, etc.

- Other relevant items aligned with department guidelines

Service

- Evidence of committee activity
- Outcomes of committee work or materials that demonstrate impact
- Evidence of consultancy(ies) or service to community partners/organizations
- Outcomes of consultancy(ies) or materials that demonstrate impact
- Evidence of mentoring (faculty or student mentoring)
- Evidence of office(s) held and/or participation in profession organizations or community organizations
- Service awards, fellowships, or honors
- Other relevant items chosen by the faculty member

Additionally, letters of support that are not attached to any single category of evaluation may be included in the portfolio and counted as one additional material for review.