

The Department of Physics and Astronomy
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Departmental Bylaws

November 30, 2005

I. Introduction

The Department of Physics and Astronomy at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is to be governed by these bylaws. These bylaws are subject to all policies and provisions as set forth both by the *Faculty Handbook* and the bylaws of the College of Arts and Sciences.

II. Faculty

A. Department Head

1. The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences appoints the department head following consultation with department faculty.
2. The department head assumes administrative responsibility for the management of the physics department.
3. The department head shall preside over meetings of the faculty and the board of visitors
4. The department head may appoint one or more associate heads from among the faculty of the department to assist in the administration of the department.

B. Faculty Membership

1. The faculty of the department shall consist of all professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, and lecturers who hold an appointment in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.
2. The voting faculty includes all faculty members except those who are retired, research professors, visiting members, and those whose University of Tennessee appointment is part-time. However, a faculty member is included in the voting faculty if he or she:
 - a) has tenure;
 - b) has a "continuing part-time" appointment, as defined by the Faculty Handbook; or
 - c) has been granted voting rights by the voting faculty.

3. Affirmative vote by two-thirds of the voting members is required to grant voting rights. Renewal of such rights will be reviewed on an annual basis.
4. Joint Faculty with shared appointments between The University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, as defined by the Joint Faculty agreement between UT and UT-Battelle, enjoy all the same privileges and responsibilities within the department as tenured or tenure-track faculty independent of whether their home institution is UT or ORNL with the exception that Joint Faculty with home institution at ORNL cannot vote on tenure decisions. The UT workload requirements for Joint Faculty are prorated according to the UT share of their appointment.

C. Faculty Meetings

1. There shall be a faculty meeting at least once in each term during the academic year.
2. The department head shall distribute the agenda for faculty meetings to the faculty at least five calendar days, if feasible, before the meeting.

D. Hiring of Faculty

1. Faculty shall be hired in keeping with the department's long-range plan, which is to be updated at least every five years by the planning committee. This plan sets forth the priority areas for new faculty hires. New opportunities can be brought to the department head and the planning committee for consideration, and then to the faculty upon approval by the planning committee. New circumstances or initiatives at the University can lead to a re-evaluation of the long-range plan.
2. Proposals for specific hires should be taken to the department head, then to the planning committee, before presentation to the faculty.
3. A majority of the voting faculty must support a specific hiring proposal before it can be acted upon. Once such a majority opinion has been achieved, the department head will present the proposal to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
4. If the dean approves a search for a new faculty hire, the department head will establish a search committee, including a distribution of faculty from different research areas.
5. The search committee shall assume responsibility for interviewing and recommending candidates for the faculty position. The faculty must vote on the candidates.
6. The department head reviews the votes of the search committee and the votes of the faculty and makes a recommendation to the dean.

E. Promotion and Tenure

1. All departmental actions concerning appointment to the faculty, retention, tenure, and promotion, will conform to the standards and procedures set forth in the *Faculty Handbook*.
2. The department head shall appoint a mentor for a newly hired assistant professor. The mentor will be a departmental faculty member working in an area of research close to that of the new assistant professor. After the assistant professor has served three years on the faculty, the department head will ask the departmental promotion and tenure committee to perform a midterm review of him or her. The purpose of this review is to judge the progress of the junior faculty member toward tenure, make recommendations on needed improvements, and advise the department head and the tenured faculty on retention. To make this assessment, the promotion and tenure committee will seek letters from external reviewers who are recognized experts in the candidate's field, interview the mentor, and review the record in teaching, funding, and research.
3. The department head may identify candidates for promotion and tenure, or faculty members may propose candidates. Faculty members may also propose themselves for promotion and tenure. Nominations will be in accordance with the Chancellor's letter of appointment.
4. The department head must judge candidates' qualifications according to the *Faculty Handbook* and then submit his or her nominations to the department's promotion and tenure committee. The P&T committee will be responsible for specifying names of evaluators, some suggested by the candidates and some suggested by the faculty.
5. The department head sends letters requesting evaluations. The candidate will then present a departmental colloquium.
6. There must be two faculty meetings to discuss promotion and tenure for a candidate. The first meeting is devoted to discussion of the data. The second meeting involves further discussion and a vote. If possible, meetings should be at least three weeks apart to give faculty time to study the related data regarding a candidate's nomination. The formal vote, as well as a written summary of the tenured faculty's deliberation, will be recorded. A two-thirds vote of the tenured faculty will be considered a positive recommendation.
7. The department head, in forming his or her own promotion and tenure recommendation, should consider whether a consensus of the faculty forms. Both the faculty vote and department head recommendation are submitted.
8. The department head must notify the tenured faculty if his or her recommendation deviates from the majority of the faculty. The head must also inform the faculty of his or her recommendation before submittal to the dean.

9. The department head must provide the faculty member with a copy of the recommendation at the same time it is submitted to the dean.

10. Tenured faculty, individually or collectively, may forward a dissenting report to the next level of review.

F. Annual Faculty Evaluations

1. Each faculty member must submit to the department head by March 1 of each calendar year a report detailing:

- a) Papers published in refereed journals
- b) Books published
- c) Success in competitive funding/external funding support
- d) Invited talks at meetings and conferences by the faculty member or the graduate students or postdocs working directly for him or her
- e) Major prizes and honors
- f) Professional recognition/important national committees and boards
- g) Activities in teaching (including graduate student supervision)
- h) Public service
- i) Departmental and University service

2. The department head completes the evaluation, which must be signed by the faculty member, and submits the report to the dean by May 1. Adequate time must be given to allow the faculty member to review the report.

3. The review culminates in a ranking of 1 to 4 as follows:

- a) (1) exceeds expectations for rank
- b) (2) meets expectations for rank
- c) (3) needs improvement for rank
- d) (4) unsatisfactory performance for rank

4. The department head or faculty member may request a formal meeting to discuss issues relating to the evaluation.

5. A faculty member whose performance is given a (3) or (4) rating must consult with the department head to develop a written statement of areas needing attention.

G. Cumulative Performance Review

1. In accordance with UTK Board policy, a cumulative review of tenured faculty is conducted every five years, with 20% of the faculty selected each year for post-tenure review.

2. Supporting materials for the cumulative review will include reports from annual reviews, curriculum vitae, and a statement on the faculty member's research/creative achievement philosophy.

3. The cumulative performance review will be carried out by a three-person peer review committee, including two representatives from the department and one from outside the department. The review will use the same criteria and ranking system outlined in the annual review (II.F.).
4. The report from the peer review committee is advisory to the department head, who then makes his or her own assessment and prepares a summary report.
5. The faculty member being reviewed shall be provided the opportunity to read and comment on the evaluation by the peer review committee when it is forwarded to the department head and to read and comment on the evaluation by the department head. All reports and comments on them shall be maintained in personnel files in the department, with copies provided to the dean's office.
6. The department head shall alter the post-tenure review process as needed to comply with University and College requirements.

H. Teaching Loads

1. In accordance with UTK policy, a full-time load shall be defined as the equivalent of 12 credit hours per term. There are four factors involved in determining teaching assignments:
 - a) Teaching a lecture or laboratory course
 - b) Guiding graduate students in research
 - c) Personal scientific research
 - d) Service to the department, the University, and/or the public
2. The department head makes each semester's teaching assignments based on the above workload factors. The department head will consider faculty requests for specific teaching assignments and is the final arbiter of disputes involving assignments.

III. Departmental Affairs

A. Standing Committees

1. The department head proposes a committee structure subject to approval by the faculty. The department head appoints committees and their respective chairs.
2. The major standing committees normally function only during the academic year, and meet at least once during each term. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair or on petition of three members. The department head shall be advised of all meetings.
3. The following core committees must exist within the department:
 - a) Undergraduate Studies (with student representation)
 - b) Graduate Studies (with student representation)
 - c) Promotion and Tenure*
 - d) Planning*
 - e) Prelim (Ph.D. Qualifying Exams)

**Must include a distribution of people from different research specialties.*

4. The current committee structure includes the core committees as well as:
 - a) Engineering Physics
 - b) Undergraduate College of Arts and Sciences Advising
 - c) Undergraduate Advising
 - d) Undergraduate Physics Majors Recruitment
 - e) Graduate Program
 - f) Graduate Student Recruitment
 - g) Endowment Development and Alumni Relations
 - h) Awards
 - i) Graduate Student Liaison
 - j) Undergraduate Liaison
 - k) Student Appeals Review
 - l) Instructional Strategies using Electronic Media
 - m) Shop

5. The department head will review committee membership each year and make necessary changes, if any.

6. The department head also recommends certain faculty and staff to assume responsibility for various departmental issues. The core assignments are:
 - a) Colloquium
 - b) Graduate Admissions
 - c) Ph.D. Qualifying Exams
 - d) Placement Exam (Graduate Students)
 - e) Honors Day
 - f) Radiation Safety
 - g) Environmental Health and Safety
 - h) Ombudsman

7. The current areas of responsibility include the core assignments as well as:
 - a) Graduate Student Progress
 - b) Dean's Advisory Council
 - c) History
 - d) Inventory
 - e) Building Representative
 - f) Library Representative
 - g) Society of Physics Students Advisor
 - h) Astronomy Outreach and Public Programs
 - i) Publications Coordinator
 - j) Surplusing
 - k) Joint Institute for Heavy Ion Research

B. Ombudsman

1. Any student complaints must be presented to the student's instructor before going to the ombudsman (as appointed in III.A.6).

- 2. After stating complaints in writing to his or her instructor and the ombudsman, a student may approach the department head regarding the issue in question.
- 3. The department head may refer the student's case to the student appeals review committee for recommendations on a resolution to the stated problem.

C. Curriculum/Undergraduate and Graduate Requirements

- 1. Proposed curriculum changes are reviewed by the graduate and undergraduate studies committees and then voted upon. If passed, they are forwarded to the faculty for a vote.
- 2. After faculty approval, any proposed changes addressing the curriculum will be forwarded through the appropriate University channels.

D. Advising

- 1. Undergraduate and graduate physics majors are to be under the advisement of the department's faculty.
- 2. The department will provide faculty to work in the Arts and Sciences Advising Center as required by the College.

E. Ph.D. Qualifying Exams

- 1. It is recommended that graduate students take the departmental qualifying exams after two years of graduate courses.
- 2. Students may fail at most five individual qualifying tests and must pass all of them within two years after first taking the qualifying examination. Individual tests already passed do not need to be retaken. Students would fail the exams (and consequently be disqualified from the doctoral program in physics) in the following scenarios (for tests taken in successive years; F is fail, P means pass):

F	F	F	
F	F	F	Out
P	F	F	
	F	F	
	P	F	Out
F	F	F	
P	F	F	
	P	F	Out

- 3. In assessing the Ph.D. qualifying examinations, the department normally takes into account the student's entire academic record with particular reference to (1) the grade average in graduate courses and (2) demonstration of aptitude for

research, as well as the performance on the qualifying examinations. The doctoral program should be completed within five years after passage of the Ph.D. qualifying examinations.

4. The faculty member appointed to coordinate the qualifying exams (see section III.A.6) suggests to the department head a list of exam committee members for that year. The department head then appoints the committee.

5. The faculty member responsible for the qualifying exams announces the date of the exams, the committee, and the topics to be covered.

6. The University of Tennessee Space Institute shall be represented by one member of the exam committee. This provision is made because UTSI students are required to take the same qualifying exams as students on the UTK campus.

7. The Qualifying Exams shall be scheduled for the first week of August to allow the committee to grade the exams before fall registration.

8. The faculty shall meet before fall registration to take the recommendations of the exam committee and vote on pass/fail results.

F. Graduate Students

1. Graduate students are expected to teach instructional laboratories as full teaching assistants during their first year of graduate study and full or half-time TAs during their second year.

2. If a graduate student chooses to pursue a master's degree without writing a thesis, he or she must follow the guidelines outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook, including 18 hours of core courses, six semester hours in a minor field, six semester hours from additional 400-level courses or above, seminar, and a written exam.

3. It is the expectation that faculty will raise funding for students to work with them after they pass their qualifying examinations.

4. A major professor of a Ph.D. student must be approved to direct research. If a student is working with Oak Ridge National Laboratory or other outside scientific research institution, the chair of the student's committee must be a University of Tennessee professor.

IV. Amendments

A. The faculty shall have the power to amend these bylaws according to the following procedures:

1. Amendment proposals shall originate through a petition to the planning committee signed by at least seven members of the voting faculty.
2. The planning committee shall present proposed amendments to the faculty in writing before the earliest possible regular faculty meeting following receipt of a petition.
 - a) At that faculty meeting (or subsequent meetings when in order) a motion to poll the faculty for the purpose of adopting the prospective amendment may be made and voted upon according to the usual rules of parliamentary procedure, a majority vote being sufficient to carry the motion.
 - b) After a motion to poll the faculty has carried, a ballot shall be distributed immediately to all voting faculty and, after seven days, the planning committee shall count votes. An affirmative vote by two-thirds of the voting faculty shall constitute an enactment of the amendment. The voting faculty shall be informed in writing of the amendment when it is enacted.
 - c) Amendments shall become effective immediately following the vote of enactment.

B. The planning committee shall review the bylaws at least once every five years to determine their effectiveness and propose amendments if necessary.