

Mentor Committees: Frequently Asked Questions

Are mentor committees required?

The University requires that *all* assistant professors on tenure or CHS track have mentor committees. We are audited yearly for compliance with this regulation.

What about CT (Clinician/Teacher) track faculty?

At this point in time we have no official mentoring requirements for CT track faculty. We are in the process of reevaluating this policy.

What are the purposes of mentor committees?

There are basically two reasons why we have mentor committees. One is to help junior faculty anticipate what will be expected of them for promotion to associate professor and to help them plan their careers so that they will meet those expectations. The second purpose for mentor committees is to provide counsel and guidance on how to have a satisfying career as a faculty member in our department and as a young professional and academician.

How are mentor committees selected?

We typically let a junior faculty member choose the members of his or her mentor committee. As a general rule, a mentor committee for CHS faculty consists of 3 senior faculty members. One member should be explicitly designated as the chairperson. At least one mentor should be knowledgeable about the specific area or areas of particular interest to the mentee on which his or her promotion may ultimately be based, ie research, women's health, community medicine, etc. In addition, at least one of the mentors should be familiar with the expectations for promotion. Members do not have to be faculty in our department; academic staff with particular expertise relevant to the mentee's interests can serve on committees. However, the chairperson should be a faculty member in the DFM. Mentor committees for faculty on tenure track often have more than three members. Most of them should be tenured faculty.

When should a new faculty member choose a mentor committee?

We expect mentor committees to be established and finalized within the first 6 months of a junior faculty member's starting date.

What if new faculty member does not select a mentor committee

We will first remind the new faculty member to designate a committee. If that does not happen in a timely manner we will assign one.

How often should mentor committees meet?

We require a minimum of two formal meetings per year, presumably at roughly 6 month intervals. By “formal meeting” we mean a specific time when the mentee and mentors meet specifically to review the former’s activities and to discuss issues relevant to his or her promotion and professional development. A report of all such formal meetings should be forwarded to the chairperson of the Promotions and Mentoring Committee (Ken Kushner). Formal mentor committee meetings should not take the place of informal discussions with one or more mentors. In fact, we encourage such interactions.

How should mentor committee meetings be reported?

As mentioned above, a report should be made of all formal mentor committee meetings. Please use the following link on our internal DFM website to file your reports: <https://inside.fammed.wisc.edu/faculty/index.html>. The form needs to be submitted online first. Then, please fax a signed and dated copy of the report to Ken Kushner at (608) 630-5813. It is the responsibility of the chairperson on the mentor committee to see that the form is filled out and forwarded to the chairperson of the Department’s Promotion and Mentoring Committee. *The only way the Department knows that a meeting has taken place is if a report is filed.*

Whose responsibility is it to make sure that mentor committee meetings take place?

We ask that the mentee take primary responsibility to ensure that meetings take place. However, we have recently instituted a system to send reminders to the mentee and chair of the committee 6 months after the previous meeting.

Can the Department help schedule meetings of mentor committees?

Yes. Please contact Ken Kushner’s support staff to request assistance.

What if a mentor committee does not meet even after reminders are given?

The chairperson of the Promotions and Mentoring Committee will notify the junior faculty member’s campus director and the chairperson of the Department of Family Medicine.

What is the difference between a mentor committee and an internal review committee?

An internal review committee is an ad hoc subcommittee of the Promotions and Mentoring Committee that is set up specifically to make a recommendation on whether a faculty member should be promoted. Thus, an internal review committee has a more circumscribed function than a mentor committee, which has the broader responsibility of providing ongoing professional guidance. For junior faculty on the CHS track, internal review committees are typically set up in their 5th or 6th year. Currently, the committee of tenured faculty serves as the internal review committee for those on tenure track.

Do we have a mentoring system for associate and full professors?

Not at this time. We have no expectation that mentor committees continue to meet after junior faculty are promoted to associate professor. However, all should have post-promotion reviews with the chairperson of the DFM or his or her designee.