

## Promotion & Tenure file

# Checklist

Prepared by Max Liboiron for IndigeLab Network, July 2025.

This checklist is designed to help you prepare a promotion and tenure file that aligns with professional norms and is easy for evaluators to assess. Based on experience reviewing files as both a committee member and external evaluator, it highlights professional expectations as well as common errors and omissions that can obscure your strengths or even raise doubts for reviewers. While different disciplines, countries, and institutional contexts may vary, remember that your file will be read by both internal committees and external reviewers.

This checklist is meant to supplement IndigeLab Network promotion and tenure resources, including “8 Maxims for a promotion and tenure file,” “Research Impact in Focus: Tools and Strategies for Promotion and Tenure Documentation,” and “Promotion and tenure files for community-based research.”

## Foundation

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- ☐ Read your unit's promotion and tenure criteria document(s) early and highlight the criteria on which you will be evaluated.
  - ☐ Talk to your department head about best practices in your unit and for your specific case.
  - ☐ Ask to see your colleagues' dossiers from when they applied.
  - ☐ Based on the above, create a list of what you need to obtain promotion and tenure.
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## Curriculum Vitae (CV)

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### Publications

- ☐ Divide publications into different sections for: peer-reviewed, invited (which includes editor-reviewed), book chapters, and reports. Peer-reviewed monographs (books) are separate from peer-reviewed articles.
- ☐ If your type of scholarship includes white papers, research reports, Op Eds, technical reports, commissioned research, evaluations, films, or writing for public audiences (like blog posts), include headings for these. You may want to include metrics like viewership, who commissioned reports, and other details unique to the publication type
- ☐ Publications that are not out yet are in their own section at the end. These include either sections or indications for papers that are: in preparation (you're still writing it but it exists), under review (submitted to a journal), under revision (you've gotten a revise and resubmit from the journal), resubmitted after revision (undergoing second review), and in press (in the publisher's hand being formatted and going to come out any... minute...)

- ☐ Bold your name in author lists in publications: this is so that someone reviewing your work can easily see where you fall in author order.
  - ☐ Indicate student co-authors. Usually, student authors are underlined in the co-author list, but whatever you do to flag them, provide a key in that section of your CV.
  - ☐ If relevant, add a note about anchor or first author roles and Credit statements. These often appear in brackets at the end of a publication line.
  - ☐ If applicable, include notations for open access, Altmetric scores, and other relevant annotations.
  - ☐ Consider numbering your publications so the number continues through different types of publications.
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## Funding

- ☐ Divide funding by role: Principal Investigator (lead), Co-applicant (core researcher but not the lead), or Collaborator (affiliated researcher). If you are a junior researcher and helped prepare the application, note that at the end of the funding line.
  - ☐ Include: Years inclusive, name of project, funder, funding stream/program, team member names and roles, amount of award [total award and sub amount you received, if applicable]
  - ☐ Expand all acronyms. If your university is the funder, name the university.
  - ☐ If applicable, list collaborator disciplines on grants: If you have co-applicants or collaborators on a grant, list their disciplines in brackets. It lets reviewers make a case for interdisciplinarity.
  - ☐ Consider putting a summary table at the top of the funding section with the total amount of funding, with breakdowns for the total amount in different roles and/or internal and external funders, and/or the discipline of funding.
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## Presentations

- ☐ Use subheadings to divide presentation by type: Keynotes, Juried (usually professional conferences), Invited, as well as genres specific to your work, such as guest lectures in classrooms, community or public presentations, expert witness testimonies, and posters. If you do not use these headings, annotate whether presentations are invited or juried. Juried presentations are peer-reviewed, while invited ones show a reputation.
  - ☐ Include the year, date, title of the presentation, location/venue, and if you have co-presenters.
  - ☐ If you're including guest course lectures, include the university and the course, even if it is your home university. Note that guest class lectures are usually worth the least amount of all the types of talks, and most people will not list them at all, especially if you're at a research-intensive university.
  - ☐ Consider numbering your talks so the numbers continue through different types of presentations.
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## Teaching

- ☐ Include the course name and number, department, and university.
  - ☐ Identify the number of students in each of your courses. Evaluating a course with 300 people is different than one with 12.
  - ☐ Identify new preps, courses that you developed from the ground up, and other specialized forms of intellectual production in teaching with an \* or other notation.
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## Mentorship

- ☐ Use different headings for different roles: e.g. students that you co-supervise, supervise, or for whom you serve on their committee or as an external for a dissertation. Do not group them together, since direct supervision is worth more than serving on a committee.

- ☐ Divide mentorship for undergraduate theses, master's students, PhD students, postdocs, and informal mentees by subheadings.
  - ☐ Put start and end dates for mentorship, using "to present" or "anticipated [year]" for those still in-program (the former requires less updating).
  - ☐ Try to represent your informal mentoring, either under its own heading, in a list of lab members, or another way. Do not move this to service.
  - ☐ You can include student funding awards here or in your funding section under its own heading.
  - ☐ Consider including a summary table at the start of the section with the total number of students divided by your role, their type, and the number in-program and graduated.
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## Media

- ☐ Differentiate between writing for public audiences, which should go under publications, and media written by others about your work, which should go after professional presentations.
  - ☐ If you have several media spots or want to emphasize certain ones, you can divide publications into subheadings such as "feature" (your work is the main focus of the article) and "coverage" (your work is mentioned, part of an interview is included). You can also divide into local, regional, national, and international coverage.
  - ☐ Include the title, venue, journalist, and full date, as well as the media (print, radio, TV), and url if available. Use a proper citation format identical to your publication. If there is no title, put something like "Interview on the 2014 bee study".
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## Formatting

- ☐ Use headings and subheadings consistently.
  - ☐ Ensure punctuation is consistent, especially those pesky periods.
  - ☐ Ensure your CV headings stay with your content: often, a page cuts between the heading and the content, and readers lose the thread. Keep it tidy.
  - ☐ Make sure your CV and narrative numbers match: Your amount of funding, number of mentees, and number of publications should be identical in your narrative (cover letter, dossier sections) and your CV. If there's a discrepancy, it raises doubts, and as a reviewer, I always choose the lower number to be safe. If you're using a compiled number, be clear about where the number comes from.
  - ☐ Number the pages.
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## Cover letter

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- ☐ The first paragraph is about what you are applying for.
  - ☐ Name what position you're applying for and whether you are applying for promotion, tenure, or both.
  - ☐ Identify the start and end dates for the evaluation, including months.
- ☐ The second paragraph is a short characterization of you and your scholarship
  - ☐ Start with a defining "I am" statement that orients the reader to your body of work. For example, "I am an interdisciplinary soil scientist dedicated to incorporating community needs into environmental assessments," or "I am an urban cultural geographer and a specialist in the study of the built environment."
  - ☐ The next 2-4 sentences should characterize your body of work further. There's no standard way to do this, but it should be curated to whatever matters most to what you do: discipline, sub-discipline, methods or methodologies, ethics, region, topic, or impact might be highlighted here.
  - ☐ Ideally, use the top two or three terms your unit uses as criteria for promotion and/or tenure in your unit. For example, if international reputation is a criterion that perfectly

matches your strengths and will be the backbone of your argument for promotion or tenure, mention it in this paragraph.

- ☐ The third paragraph onward is about the highlights of your accomplishments. They must be framed in terms of your unit's evaluation criteria, and can include:
    - ☐ Total number of peer-reviewed publications. This number is almost always (if not always) required for evaluation. You can frame this number as peer-reviewed publications per year, a trajectory of increasing numbers of publications over time, or other ways that showcase your publication record. Do not combine all your publications together and mix peer-reviewed with non-reviewed publications without explaining the combined number. See the IndigeLab Network resource on ways to show impact for more details.
    - ☐ Top publications in terms of impact (field-changing finding or method, citation count, media coverage, top-tier journal, other publication metrics)
    - ☐ Importance of funding (total amount, variety of funders, international funders, prestige of funders, trajectory of amount or type of funds over time)
    - ☐ Other relevance of research (uptake in policy, industry, education, etc, top awards for recognition, impact in your field)
    - ☐ Teaching or mentorship impact (total number of students you've mentored, total number of percentage graduated, shifts in graduation or completion statistics, shifts in student demographics or retention, number or percent of new or full courses, teaching awards)
  - ☐ The last paragraph of your cover letter summarizes your next steps in brief terms.
  - ☐ Focus your narrative on what you've accomplished in the evaluation time frame, only referencing accomplishments outside of it to establish trajectory or longevity.
  - ☐ Use the exact terms, and even directly quote the evaluation criteria for promotion and/or tenure in your unit.
  - ☐ Focus on showing significance and impact, rather than selling yourself.
  - ☐ Make sure your CV and narrative numbers match.
  - ☐ Look at the IndigeLab Network resource on tools for articulating impact for other ways to best describe the importance of your work.
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## Research folio

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This section is written with the assumption that research is the central element evaluated for promotion and tenure, and that peer-reviewed publications and external funding carry the most weight in that evaluation. But this is not universal. Ensure that you know what your unit or university expects, and align your file with those expectations. See the IndigeLab Network resources for more details on 1) measures and metrics of impact, and 2) promotion and tenure considerations for community-based research.

### Research statement

- ☐ A defining "I am" statement that orients the reader to your body of work. For example, "I am an interdisciplinary soil scientist dedicated to incorporating community needs into environmental assessments. This will be similar to the one in your cover letter"
- ☐ A list of research goals or objectives.
- ☐ Characterization of your core research field, subfield, topic, methodology and/or theory. If there is an intersection between two or three of these, articulate the type of intersection, not just that there is a relationship.
- ☐ Characterization and one or two pieces of the best evidence of the core impact(s) of your work (more below).
- ☐ A concluding note on trajectory
- ☐ Use the exact terms, and even directly quote the evaluation criteria for promotion and/or tenure in your unit.
- ☐ If you use metrics or measures of merit or impact, mention where the numbers come from. For example, is your h-Index from Google Scholar or Web of Science? They have different h-Indexes.

- ☐ Articulate gaps, if any, framed in ways that your unit supports them (e.g. COVID protocols to stop field work, parental leave granted by the university, etc).
  - ☐ Ensure your CV and narrative numbers match.
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## Publication overview

- ☐ Include a summary of the number of peer-reviewed publications as well as other types of publications. Do not only provide a single conflated number of all publications-- be very clear which are peer reviewed and which are not, which are published and which are under review or revision. *Do not* inflate this number!
  - ☐ Highlight the most important publications in terms of prestige, impact, or other measures that matter to your promotion and tenure. This is likely not peer-reviewed publications alone.
  - ☐ You may want to include a publications/year measure, or a trajectory of the number, type, diversity, number of co-authors, your place in author order, your role in publications, prestige of journals, citation indices or counts, and other aspects of publishing to show maturity.
  - ☐ You should include a note about papers in preparation, under review, under revision, or in press (all different things), but do not include these in your total counts.
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## Funding overview

- ☐ Include an accurate count of total funding. Be clear about whether this total is all funding in all roles, and be sure to break out funding as a Principal Investigator (PI), versus as a co-applicant or collaborator.
  - ☐ Break down any differences between amounts you've received as a co-applicant or collaborator and the amount of the total award.
  - ☐ *Do not* round up, inflate your total by combining funding you didn't receive with funding you did receive on shared grants without an explanation. You never want to introduce doubt.
  - ☐ Narrate your funding history as a trajectory if you are applying for tenure and/or your first promotion. Note ratio of internal to external grants, changes in roles (collaborator to PI), increasing amounts, increasing diversity of funders or funder disciplines, increasing number of team members or diversity of team members or other elements that characterize how you are maturing your resources.
  - ☐ You may include funding you've applied for, but do not include those numbers in your totals.
  - ☐ You may include funding you've applied for and not received if evidence of professional activity is required. Be careful of narrating failure, though, and check with colleagues about your institutional culture first.
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## Other sections of the research folio

- ☐ In-depth description of research. Move into a narrative about the highlights of your work, referring back to funding or publications already mentioned as evidence. You may want to break this into sections to address different elements of your work.
  - ☐ Next steps. Include a concluding paragraph about where your research is going next. You can reference grants, publications, and partnerships under development or that have been submitted here.
  - ☐ Appendices. Follow your unit or university guidelines on appendices. Keep in mind that committee members and outside evaluators are required to read anything you include.
  - ☐ In all cases, move any service that is based on your expertise into the research folio rather than the service folio. E.g., answering emails from the public after a radio interview.
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## Teaching folio

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### Teaching responsibilities



- ☐ Summary of teaching activities during the period under review, including the names and call numbers of courses taught during which semesters/quarters, number of students in each course, and an indication of which were new preps, labs, or new courses you developed. You may want to include a summary table to help with your description, so this description isn't just a narrated list.
  - ☐ Some people include goals or course objectives for each course.
  - ☐ You may require a separate section on course or curriculum development if it characterizes your teaching. Whenever possible, move service into teaching or research portfolios.
  - ☐ Overall, characterize, rather than merely describe, your teaching responsibilities. E.g. a primarily undergraduate instructor who teaches mainly introductory courses, so you specialize in large class pedagogy and recruitment into the major.
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## Teaching philosophy

- ☐ This outlines your values, approach, and goals for teaching (these are three different things!). Any claims made here should be reflected in the rest of the dossier-- show more than you tell. Whenever possible, cross-reference to other parts of the dossier to show impact, metrics, and techniques.
  - ☐ This is usually short.
  - ☐ Resources for writing a strong teaching philosophy:
    - Three tips for crafting a great teaching philosophy statement  
<https://universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/three-tips-for-crafting-a-great-teaching-philosophy-statement/>
    - How to write a statement of teaching philosophy that shines  
<https://universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/how-to-write-a-statement-of-teaching-philosophy-that-shines/>
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## Teaching methods, strategies, and impacts

- ☐ Describe how you teach and why, and wherever possible, cross-reference evidence of why this works.
  - ☐ Include a section on assessment strategies, how they align with your goals or other parts of your teaching philosophy, and your objectives.
  - ☐ Some departments or universities expect a section on efforts at improving teaching and/or mentorship.
  - ☐ Ensure there is consistent demonstration of how your methods and strategies impact students' skill acquisition, grades, learning outcomes, or other programmatic goals.
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## Teaching evaluation

- ☐ Research how your institution understands student evaluations. Considerable research shows student evaluations are biased in terms of gender, race, and the ease of the course, so some universities do not require them. Other universities require them to be presented in a specific way (e.g. if you use one testimony, you must include all testimonies, or they require an appendix of summaries for all courses, while others disallow student comments altogether). If your unit allows you to choose whether you use student evaluation, directly quote the document so that outside reviewers are informed.
- ☐ Include multiple forms of student evaluation, such as midterm evaluations you use to alter the second half of a course, unsolicited letters or from students, and materials from teaching nominations from students. Find out about your unit's culture around student letters of recommendation solicited for promotion and tenure, as some do not allow it.
- ☐ Other forms of evaluations may include: peer evaluation from other professors or teaching and learning staff (as for these in advance), showing a shift in grades after interventions (such as moving a bi-modal grade curve into a bell curve by teaching skills, a raise in grades or a decrease in variability in grades after a change, or the reduction of 0s or failing grades), and instructor self-evaluation.

- ☐ Early in your preparation, consider assignments that have a strong evaluative nature. For example, I (Max Liboiron) do an assignment that I highlighted in all my promotion and tenure files called "before and after," where on or before the first week of class I ask all students to answer a question central to the course like, "If you were to recommend the most important way to reduce waste in the City of St. John's, what would it be?" in a course on waste. Then, in the last week of class, I ask them to answer the same question and reflect on why they answered differently now. These are short, exceptional articulations of learning outcomes, and they're fun to read.
  - ☐ Include any teaching awards or accolades.
  - ☐ Clearly articulate how evaluations align with criteria for promotion and tenure.
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## Mentorship responsibilities

- ☐ Summary of the number of students, their level, and your mentorship role. Indicate in-program versus graduated students.
  - ☐ Identify students' disciplines and programs for external reviewers.
  - ☐ Identify and provide evidence of highlights, such as sources of funding, mentorship programs, student awards, or graduation rates.
  - ☐ Explain any gaps, framed in ways that the unit supports (E.g. junior faculty are not expected to mentor graduate students until their second year).
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## Mentorship philosophy, methods, evaluation, and impacts

- ☐ The mentorship section should mirror the teaching section headings, and much of the approach will be the same. See above.
  - ☐ Include any informal mentorship here, rather than in the service dossier.
  - ☐ Evaluation and impact for mentorship may include: graduation numbers or rate, students' completion timelines, funding levels for graduate students, participation in mentorship programs, what students do after graduation (jobs, further graduate training), diversity of students, number of student authors/co-authors.
  - ☐ Include any mentorship awards or nominations.
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## Educational leadership

- ☐ Characterize how you create, refine, nuance, extend, or otherwise innovate in the classroom, in mentorship, and/or through curriculum.
  - ☐ Evidence may include: course or curriculum development or partnerships; research you've done on teaching and learning and the standing of that research; grants related to teaching or mentorship; serving as a teaching mentor; workshops or events on teaching or mentorship; professional development.
  - ☐ Some departments or universities expect a section on efforts at improving teaching and/or mentorship.
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## Resources

- Workbook with an excellent list words for skills and verbs to describe your teaching: Centre for Leadership in Learning. (nd) "Preparing a Teaching Dossier." McMaster University.  
<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/89/Documents/Preparing%20a%20Teaching%20Dossier%20McMaster.pdf>
- Template and description of a teaching dossier: Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. (2018). "Suggested Framework for a Teaching Dossier," Memorial University.  
[https://www.mun.ca/citl/media/production/memorial/administrative/centre-for-innovation-in-teaching-and-learning/media-library/teachingsupport/consultation/Framework\\_Teaching\\_Dossier\\_Nov2018.pdf](https://www.mun.ca/citl/media/production/memorial/administrative/centre-for-innovation-in-teaching-and-learning/media-library/teachingsupport/consultation/Framework_Teaching_Dossier_Nov2018.pdf)

- Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation. (2017). Developing & Assessing Teaching Dossiers: A guide for University of Toronto faculty, administrators and graduate students. Toronto: Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, University of Toronto.  
[https://www.utfa.org/sites/default/files/pastevents/Developing-Your-Teaching-Dossier\\_Accessible-Doc.pdf](https://www.utfa.org/sites/default/files/pastevents/Developing-Your-Teaching-Dossier_Accessible-Doc.pdf)
  - Excellent list of what you can use to evaluate your teaching: CAUT. (2017). Teaching Dossier. Canadian Association of University Teachers.
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## Service folio

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### Foundation

- ☐ Find out how your department or university understands service in the evolution of promotion and tenure before you begin. In most promotion and tenure committees, service is expected but is not a primary source of evaluation. However, some departments have a culture of expectation around service that may impact evaluation.
  - ☐ Create a narrative around how you choose and do service that aligns with the highlights in your cover letter and how you characterize your research and teaching.
  - ☐ A common mistake junior researchers make is to put research and/or teaching activities in service. If you answer a lot of emails from the public about your area of expertise, that's research, not service. If you train the teaching assistants in your department, either formally or informally, that goes under teaching and mentorship, not service. If you do anything that is based on your area of expertise or skills (only you could do it, not your colleague to the left) or that enriches the student learning experience, move those things into a different folio. Peer review? Research. Op Eds? Research. Mental health training? Mentorship.
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### Sections

- ☐ Philosophy: Start with a narrative about your philosophy about service: your values, approach, and goals, including why you choose some types, roles, levels, or topics of service.
  - ☐ Characterization: provide an overview of the type, amount, and level of service. This should mirror your CV and can include important trends in:
    - ☐ The level of service: department, faculty/unit, university, national level, international level.
    - ☐ Your role: Chair, member, advisor, evaluator, etc.
    - ☐ The names of committees, professional associations, journals, and other bodies without the use of acronyms.
  - ☐ If there are gaps or interruptions, explain them in ways that are supported by the university (e.g., sabbaticals, approved leaves, or that assistant professors are protected from service for the first year).
  - ☐ Impacts: What are the outcomes of your service? Include new or updated policies or guidelines, EDI targets or achievements, the number or breadth of proposals reviewed, etc.
  - ☐ Trajectory: What are your next steps for service? Narrate this as maturation or development (e.g., more international service, increasing responsibilities in professional associations, sustaining key service despite promotion or tenure)
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## External evaluators

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- ☐ Most institutions request a list of letter writers. Before you provide one, be clear about what counts as a conflict of interest. Some universities allow co-authors on papers from over five years ago to be external evaluators, for example.
- ☐ Choose people who outrank you, and ideally are full professors.
- ☐ To identify people who already know your work, look at who cites you (Google Scholar can identify them), who teach your work (use OpenSyllabi to identify them), or those who work in



the same field.

- ☐ As people that you know through your service in professional organizations, special interest groups, or on boards.
- ☐ Provide the maximum number of names requested.
- ☐ Re-read your application from the perspective of an external evaluator who is unfamiliar with your university or area of study.
- ☐ Ask a colleague from outside your university to read your application to ensure it is accessible to external reviewers.



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