A. Recruitment

A1. What is the best way to go about recruiting tenure track faculty?

The Office of Faculty Development and Diversity has a list of best practice, resources, policies and guidelines here and here. These include how to describe the position, how to assemble and run a search committee, how to develop an effective search plan and a broad pool of applicants, and how to interview and assess faculty candidates. There are important legal and Cornell Policy considerations that must be followed.

A2. What aspects of the tenure process need to be discussed during the recruitment process?

Long term departmental expectations about teaching, research, and service should be clearly communicated, as such information helps new faculty understand what the first year or two might look like. Timeline issues are particularly important: e.g., how does the tenure clock work?; when does the reappointment process start?; what is the impact of a family-related leave? Candidates vary considerably in their general understanding of the tenure process, so making tenure-related documents that are readily accessible and indicating a willingness to talk about the process send an important message to the recruit.

A3. How should a recruit with incoming experience be advised about a shortened probationary period?

If the candidate comes in with prior experience as a tenure-track assistant professor (or equivalent), the candidate and the department may agree to a shortened pre-tenure time frame. It is essential that such timeframes be realistically set (C2 offers specific advice about early promotion). The agreed-upon timeframe should be spelled out clearly in the offer letter. For example, the offer letter might include a line like “we will initiate the tenure review after X years.” A more flexible arrangement would be “we will initiate the tenure review after X years but are willing to consider an earlier review if requested.”

A4. When is it appropriate to hire someone at the associate-professor-without-tenure level?

In limited circumstances, typically when a candidate has been tenured at another institution but the department wants to appoint the candidate to an untenured position before making a tenure decision, it may be appropriate to appoint the candidate to the rank of associate-professor-without-tenure. It is appropriate that the hiring unit consider the impact of such an appointment on their current pool of assistant professors, some of whom may be highly accomplished and in their fourth or fifth year.

A5. For joint hires, what factors need to be considered?

By a “joint hire” we mean a hire that involves two departments X and Y. Appointments of this nature look exciting in a climate where interdisciplinary research is revered. However, there are risks so it is recommended that both X and Y consider this checklist of questions:

1. Why doesn’t Field membership solve the “second department” problem? Would a simple adjunct position in the second department establish the right amount of affiliation?
2. How will the candidate’s teaching assignments be determined?
3. Are X and Y on the same “research wavelength”? Do they have the same list of respected journals? Do they have the same respect for interdisciplinary work? Do they support PhD students the same way?

4. If the split is 50-50 at the time of appointment, then what is to prevent an upward creep in the commitment fraction that is “owed” to the participating units?

More advice on the dangers of joint appointments.

A6. What should be covered in the offer letter?

Offer letters should always be drafted in consultation with the local HR representative and should follow relevant college and department guidelines. In addition to information regarding compensation, benefits and the like, offer letters should explicitly deal with all relevant substantive aspects of the appointment, including the following:

1. Start date and appointment timeframes (i.e. initial appointment, reappointment, tenure review date).
2. Expectations with respect to research, teaching, service, outreach, and extension including percent-of-effort if appropriate.
3. Percent-of-effort information if the appointment is split with another unit.
4. Specific course assignments, if any.
5. Reduced load arrangements, if any.
7. Office location and support staff understandings.
8. Start-up details, e.g., discretionary accounts, research support, student support in the form of fellowships, TA positions, etc.
9. Study leave opportunities, if any.
10. Links to online tenure-related documents.