USU E-Dossier FAQs

1. What is the e-dossier?

The short answer is that the USU e-dossier is the replacement for the “blue binders”, the hard copy document used for tenure and promotion review of faculty for decades. A longer answer is that the e-dossier is a secure electronic platform and file system (currently using the Interfolio web platform) into which faculty candidates upload their tenure and promotion documentation for more convenient viewing by readers/evaluators, including the advisory committee members, department heads and supervisors, deans, central committee members, etc. Just like the blue binder, the e-dossier is an endpoint, meaning that once the candidate has completed the construction of their tenure and promotion materials on their own computers, they upload their documentation into an e-dossier case. The faculty member does not need an e-dossier case to work on their tenure and promotion materials. The e-dossier allows 24/7 simultaneous access by multiple readers/evaluators, provides a more transparent tenure and promotion review process through a status tracking function, and is a more flexible format allowing faculty to include links to supplementary electronic documentation to help make their case for career advancement.

2. Are their limits to an individual’s e-dossier file size?

Individual files can be up to 100MB in size. There is no technical limit on the number of files a dossier case can contain. But, practically speaking, just like with the blue binders, there should be some reasonable limit to the size of a tenure and promotion dossier. Best advice? The candidate should pretend they are a reader/evaluator (maybe an advisory committee member, their department head, a central committee member) and get some sense of what the limits of comfort are while reading the dossier. If an e-dossier is unreasonably lengthy, reader/evaluators might suffer e-dossier fatigue. While not usually lethal, this affliction causes severe headaches, drowsiness, and chronic grouchiness. Hopefully, candidates would want to minimize the possibility that readers/evaluators of their dossiers would suffer these symptoms.

We have stressed in every faculty e-dossier training session that there is basically one rule about e-dossier content and it is this: Information deemed of primary importance for the reader/evaluator to know in order to render a judgement and recommendation about the person’s tenure and promotion MUST be in text form in the e-dossier. This is the same as the blue binders. Examples of “primary documentation” include the teaching philosophy, teaching peer evaluations, research statement, CV, etc. In other words, no primary information should be in the dossier as a link to an external site. Also, just like the blue binder, there is much “secondary documentation” or supplemental information that is included in a tenure and promotion dossier to help add context to the value and substance of the primary information. This is where the e-dossier is much more convenient and flexible. This kind of information can now be uploaded electronically into the “additional files” part of a section, and the candidate might choose to include items such as video files or slide shows, which was not possible with the hard copy format.

3. Who uploads documents into a faculty member's e-dossier?

In order to minimize the risk of errors in the upload of documentation into someone's e-dossier, only two individuals are allowed to upload material at this time. These two individuals are the faculty member and the college dossier administrator (CDA). The CDA was appointed by the dean of each academic unit and trained in the use of e-dossiers. The role of the CDA is to establish an empty e-dossier for each faculty member going forward for evaluation this AY for tenure and promotion or third-year review. The candidate may need the help of the department or college in obtaining copies of certain documents such as past role statements, annual reviews, etc. so those can be uploaded by the candidate. CDAs will upload letters from the external peer reviewers (obtained from the department head), letters of recommendation from the tenure and promotion advisory committees, the department head or supervisor, and the deans. CDAs enter in the names of all of those who must have access to the e-dossier for the purpose of reading and evaluating the faculty member's material.

Faculty have been trained on how to upload their tenure and promotion documentation into their e-dossier and they have the primary responsibility for this. <u>This is NOT the responsibility of the CDA</u>. CDAs may assist faculty in uploads by giving instruction, or under the most unusual of circumstances, may be asked by the faculty member to help create pdfs copies of specific kinds of materials. Evaluators/readers of the dossier are not enabled to upload materials into an e-dossier.

When the faculty member has finished the upload of their tenure and promotion documents into their e-dossier case, they are responsible to submit the case for review. This can be done all at once or section-by-section, but once submission has occurred, the candidate loses the ability to edit any submitted sections. If submission occurs in error, the CDA should be notified quickly so reviewers can be informed. Only the CDA can unlock a section again for the candidate.

4. When must the faculty member upload their dossier?

It depends, but first, it must be noted that such a "deadline" does not exist in the faculty code. The time by which a candidate must turn their dossier over to the committee for review and evaluation has often been a decision made on an individual committee/faculty candidate basis. The driver for the "deadline" to turn over the dossier was the time by which the committee was required to submit their recommendation about tenure and promotion of candidate, which as we all know, is December 1 (October 26 for third year reviews). If one counts backwards from that date, and takes the Thanksgiving break into account, it is understandable that in the past many committees felt that they should get the binder in time to read it, ponder, meet and discuss it, and compose a recommendation letter probably by late October or the first part of November. Additionally, because the code gives no instruction for this, some departments have set their own deadline and sometimes colleges have set a deadline for candidates to complete the dossier and have it ready to move on to committees. The e-dossier system allows all of those options and is not interfering in that step.

5. Does the faculty member know who is reading their dossier at any particular moment?

Not exactly. There is no tracking function in the Interfolio platform that informs the faculty member exactly when someone is online looking at their dossier or for how long an evaluator/reader is taking to review their materials. However, as CDAs upload recommendation letters from the advisory committee, their department head, and dean, they can immediately share the letter with the candidate through the Committee Documents section of the e-dossier case. This is one of the enhanced transparency features of the e-dossier and conforms to faculty code, which requires that the candidate receive these letters at the time they are submitted to the next level of review.

6. Can the e-dossier be used for external peer reviewers?

We will not be using the e-dossier system to solicit external peer reviews for the 2017-2018 promotion and tenure cycle. In the first year of use with the Interfolio system, we want to focus on acquainting faculty and reviewers on the basic functionality of the system. This upcoming spring we will take the time necessary to properly train heads on how to solicit external peer review letters through the system. We will then implement that aspect of the new e-dossier platform in the next promotion and tenure cycle during the 2018-2019 year.

7. Can the e-dossier be previewed by someone other than the candidate before it is submitted in its final form?

At this time, Interfolio does not permit candidates to share their e-dossier materials with anybody prior to submitting them. Therefore, candidates are encouraged to do any pre-submission sharing *outside* of the e-Dossier system. It is common practice for candidates to share a "draft" of the tenure and promotion dossier with their advisory committee members for feedback. According to the faculty code, <u>the candidate is responsible for the content of the tenure and promotion dossier</u> – NOT the committee. Perhaps it has become traditional for committees to feel some degree of responsibility for the dossier, but they should be mindful of the candidate's right to make decisions regarding changes to their documentation given its importance. If a tenure and promotion decision is negative, that should be based on decisions by the candidate about the style and content of the binder.

8. What happens to the e-dossier at the conclusion of the tenure and promotion process?

E-dossier cases are closed and stored in an archived state in Interfolio after the review cycle is complete. They remain available to the candidate after the tenure and promotion cycle has concluded in a read-only format. It is common practice that faculty coming forward for tenure and promotion review look at dossiers of previously successful candidates. This will be easy to do with the e-dossier because the candidate can ask the CDA to give that person access to their retired e-dossier.