

Q1: What was the SME Task Force and why was it created?

A1: In Fall 2016, the Provost created a Task Force on Statements of Mutual Expectations (SMEs) and [charged the Task Force](#) with recommending revisions to improve consistency and clarity of SMEs. This Task Force was created in response to a pattern of concerns raised by [University Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee](#) (URPTC) members. Over the past several years, URPTC observed errors, omissions, and inconsistencies in candidates' SMEs that, in their judgment, had the potential to create confusion during candidates' reviews for award of promotion and/or permanent tenure or during post-tenure review.

The SME Task Force, chaired by Dr. Jane Lubischer and composed of faculty and department heads from all NC State Colleges, worked throughout academic year 2016-2017 and recommended several changes to the SME content and process. That report can be [found here](#). Based on the report recommendations, the Provost has approved a transition process described below.

Q2: What will be changing about SMEs?

A2: Three key changes will occur to SMEs and the SME process:

- **New name** - After much discussion, the Task Force recommended that the name of these documents change from "Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME)" to "Statement of Faculty Responsibilities (SFR)."
- **New online tool** - The Task Force recommended the development of an online module to articulate with the RPTOnline system that will allow for immediate checks of common errors in SMEs/SFRs, such as total percent effort of over 100% and a lack of documentation of reasons for changes in faculty effort or activity descriptions. The online module, to be called SFROnline, is being developed in consultation with members of the SME Task Force and will allow upload of existing SMEs as supplemental information to minimize the need for "backfilling" of information.
- **Additional guidance on faculty activities** - The Task Force has developed additional guidance for the descriptions of faculty activities in each realm in which a faculty member has significant effort. These guidelines were designed to encourage clear descriptions that provide clarity regarding departmental expectations but are not overly specific to the point that they limit faculty members' academic freedom or their adaptation to changing instructional or scholarly priorities.

Q3: What will not be changing when we transition to Statements of Faculty Responsibilities (SFRs)?

A3: SFRs will be the same as SMEs on four key points:

- SFRs will continue to be developed through discussions between a faculty member and department head, with a dean's involvement if no agreement between the faculty member and head can be reached (per [REG 05.20.27](#)).

- SFRs will continue to identify rough percentages of faculty activity in the six realms of faculty responsibility and describe in general terms the activities to be undertaken by the faculty member in those realms.
- SFRs will continue to be required in RPT dossiers and PTR packets.
- SFRs will always be modifiable as faculty members' responsibilities shift over their career at NC State, and changes will continue to be documented within the SFR to provide context for faculty evaluations.

Q4: What is the timeline for these changes?

A4: The changes will occur as follows:

- **Pilot SFROnline** - The online module described above (SFROnline) is currently in development and will be piloted in Spring 2018 with two or three departments that were identified by the SME Task Force. The Office of Faculty Affairs will work with faculty and department heads to identify needed revisions to the SFROnline tool during this time.
- **Update regulations and rules** - From Spring 2018 through Fall 2018, NC State's Office of Faculty Affairs will work with the Faculty Senate, department heads, and deans to implement necessary revisions of NC State regulations and rules. In a majority of cases, this will involve minor changes such as changing "SME" to "SFR" in various places in the regulation or rule.
- **SFROnline available for campus-wide use** - In Academic Year 2018-2019, the SFROnline module will be available for campus-wide use. The new SFR format and online module will be optional for RPT dossiers submitted in RPTOnline in the 2018-2019 review cycle.
- **New SFR format required** - Beginning in the 2019-2020 RPT review cycle, the new SFR format will be required for RPT dossiers. The SFR format will also be required for new faculty beginning in Academic Year 2019-2020.
- **Information about the transition** - The Office of Faculty Affairs will be providing information about the SME-to-SFR transition via the [Provost's website](#), in campus-wide information sessions, and other meetings beginning in Spring 2018 and continuing throughout the transition period. Katharine Stewart and Courtney Thornton will be available to colleges, departments, and individuals for consultation, Q&A sessions, and other support as needed.

Q5: If I have questions about the SME-SFR transition, whom should I contact?

A5: Please contact Katharine Stewart, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, at kestewa4@ncsu.edu or at 919-513-7741, or Courtney Thornton, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Policy, at chthornt@ncsu.edu or at 919-515-5490, if you have questions about the transition process.