

# 12.07.99.D1.01    Institutional Procedure for Professional Track Faculty



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Next Scheduled Review: August 3, 2031

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## Procedure Summary

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The institutional procedure for employment of professional-track (non-tenure-track) faculty at Texas A&M University-Central Texas (A&M-Central Texas) are based on The Texas A&M University System (A&M System) Policies, as revised and approved by the System Board of Regents (Board). This procedure establishes supplemental guidelines at A&M-Central Texas regarding institutional procedures relating to the appointment, evaluation and promotion of professional-track faculty members.

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## Procedure

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### 1. GENERAL

This procedure supplements System Policy *12.07, Fixed Term Academic Professional Track Faculty*, and recognizes the occasional need to appoint non-tenure-track full-time faculty members in addition to tenured or tenure-track full-time faculty. Individuals who are appointed to a professional-track position should be carefully selected and uniquely qualified. They should be faculty who provide specialized services in support of the mission of the university. Appointment and promotion of professional-track faculty at A&M-Central Texas must be based upon the experience and academic background of the candidate as well as the needs of the academic program. When it meets the needs of the university, qualified professional-track candidates with rank from prior institutions may be eligible to be appointed with rank at A&M-Central Texas. Professional-track faculty are not tenure eligible, though they may apply for promotion in rank.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL-TRACK FACULTY

Appointment to a professional-track faculty position ordinarily requires completion of the appropriate terminal degree. Exceptions to this requirement may be made only by permission of the president of the university based on the recommendation of the provost after confirmation of the appropriate faculty credentials. No more than 20% of the full-time budgeted faculty positions in any individual academic college will be designated as professional-track without the permission of the president.

- 2.1. Terms of Appointment: Professional-track faculty often have varying duties based on the type of position they fill. The specific terms of employment for all professional-track faculty must be detailed in the appointment letter, including requirements for teaching, research (or creative activity), service, and specified professional responsibilities. These

expectations should be clearly identified in their appointment letters, either as a percentage or some other quantification that makes it clear to both the supervisor and faculty member (i.e., 75% of time teaching, 12 credit hours taught, one university-level committee, etc.). These quantifications will form the basis for annual evaluations and will inform decisions relevant to promotion.

2.1.1. Regardless of rank, initial appointments for all new professional-track faculty are for one academic year. These appointments may be renewed upon request to the provost from the appropriate supervisor. After a professional-track faculty member has served for at least three years, they may become eligible for a renewable appointment of up to 3 years. Professional-track faculty members who have three-year appointments will still be subject to annual performance reviews.

2.1.2. Departments who do not intend to renew the appointment of a professional track faculty member at the end of their contracted employment date, must inform the faculty member in writing no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic year when their appointment is set to expire; a copy of this letter must be provided to the Office of the Provost at the same time.

2.1.3. A summer course load is not guaranteed for professional-track faculty with teaching responsibilities.

2.2. Position Titles: The position title selected for a professional-track faculty position must be approved by the appropriate dean and the provost and must not be readily confused with traditional tenure and tenure-track designations. Within the position title, the individual's rank will be designated commensurate with the individual's credentials and/or experience. For example, a lecturer will be designated Assistant Lecturer, Associate Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and similarly with Research or Clinical Faculty and Librarians.

Descriptions of the major categories of professional-track positions are as follows:

- (a) *Lecturer* has a full-time teaching appointment with relatively heavier teaching loads, and usually some service expectations and/or fieldwork to substitute for the lack of research expectations.
- (b) *Visiting faculty members* receive limited-term appointments, and (depending on the appointment) their duties may focus on teaching, research, and/or service.
- (c) *Research faculty members* engage in research programs of major scope that benefit the university. Usually, these positions are at least partly supported by exterior funding sources and have minimal teaching or service expectations.
- (d) *Clinical faculty members* are highly skilled and experienced practitioners (usually in nursing, health and behavioral sciences, social work, or teacher education) who address a specific need in a department or college.
- (e) *Librarians* receive a full-time appointment in the University Library & Archives with duties relevant to teaching and collection building. These positions have some service and research expectations. **Note:** The supervisory structure for faculty in the University Library & Archives differs slightly from that of faculty in the academic colleges. Rather than departments led by chairs, the University Library & Archives has areas led by supervisors. In this and related university rules and procedures, references to departments and chairs can be understood as relating to areas and supervisors for faculty in the University Library & Archives.

### 3. ANNUAL EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL-TRACK FACULTY

Professional-track faculty will be evaluated annually by their department chair based on their accomplishments in four major categories of performance: teaching, professional responsibility, service, scholarship (or creative activity). These accomplishments should be weighed given the expectations communicated in their appointment letter(s) and annual evaluations for their position in relation to each category. Every professional-track position is different, and will require different degrees of teaching, professional responsibility, service, and scholarship. Each category should be considered an ongoing academic practice in which a faculty member is expected to grow and develop throughout their respective career. The evaluation of the performance of faculty members in these categories constitutes an exercise in academic judgment that is founded upon on a broad array of measurements and indicators, both quantitative and qualitative.

3.1. Teaching and Professional Responsibility: Effective performance in one's position, whether through teaching and/or professional duties, is a minimum expectation for all professional-track faculty, and no positive recommendation for promotion at the university will be given if there is doubt regarding effectiveness in this category. Professional-track faculty are unique in that they may spend most of their time teaching, or they may be responsible for professional duties that intersect with the teaching mission of the institution, such as supervising a student-training clinic or aiding students on the library's reference desk. The uniqueness of each position should be considered when evaluating teaching and professional responsibility, based on the criteria set out in the faculty member's appointment letter.

3.1.1. Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness: The evaluation of teaching effectiveness should be as comprehensive as possible, and should systematically incorporate the feedback of students, supervisors, and peers over time regarding such things as rigor, engagement, innovation, how well the faculty member understands the development and dissemination of knowledge within their respective discipline, how well they establish an environment conducive to learning, how well they motivate students to think and analyze critically, how effectively they communicate, and to what degree they instill a genuine desire in students to continue learning.

3.1.2. Evaluation of Professional Responsibility: The evaluation of professional responsibility should be as comprehensive as possible, and should systematically incorporate the feedback of students, supervisors, and peers. This feedback may be varied, and could include aggregate user experience data, departmental satisfaction surveys, or other kinds of feedback, depending on the nature of the faculty member's position. This feedback should address issues such as the faculty member's level of engagement, innovation, competence, how well they understand the best practices and requirements of the position, how well they establish an environment conducive to learning, how effectively they communicate, and how effectively they support student learning.

3.2. Service: Service that a professional-track faculty member renders in a professional capacity to the university, their profession, and/or to the wider community will be evaluated annually. The evaluation of a faculty member's service should consider the specific, positive, and substantive contributions of the faculty member to the effective functioning of the service entity (i.e., committee, board, association, etc.), as well as the benefits and/or guidance provided by the faculty member to those who are being served

(e.g., students, colleagues, clients). By themselves, memberships in and/or affiliations with service bodies are insufficient to establish a record of service.

3.3. Scholarship and/or Creative Activity: There is often significant variability in the level of scholarship and/or creative activity expected of a professional-track faculty. The level of activity expected for a faculty member should be communicated in their appointment letters and at annual evaluations.

- 3.3.1. Maintaining discipline currency: All professional-track faculty are expected to maintain currency in their discipline through regular scholarly and/or creative activities. In addition to the production of scholarship, this may also include professional development through the attainment and maintenance of documented credentials pertinent to teaching or professional responsibilities, completion of discipline-relevant courses for continuing education credit, and attendance and/or presentation at professional conferences.
- 3.3.2. Scholarly or Artistic Endeavors: Scholarship at A&M-Central Texas can be defined as those activities that systematically advance the teaching, research, and knowledge of academic disciplines through rigorous inquiry that
  - (a) is significant to the discipline,
  - (b) is made public,
  - (c) is creative,
  - (d) can be documented,
  - (e) can be replicated or built on by other scholars, and
  - (f) is available for peer review and critique according to accepted standards.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, scholarship at A&M-Central Texas encompasses four possible areas critical of academic work,<sup>2</sup> including the scholarship of:

- (a) discovery, where new and unique knowledge is generated;
- (b) teaching, where the professor creatively builds bridges between their own understanding and the students' learning;
- (c) application, where the emphasis is on the use of new knowledge to solve society's problems; and
- (d) integration, where new relationships among disciplines are discovered.

A faculty member's scholarly work should both contribute to their discipline and serve as an indication of professional competence and development. It should serve as a vehicle to enrich and inform the faculty member's instruction. To qualify as scholarship or creative work, the results of a scholarly or artistic endeavor must be disseminated and subject to critical peer evaluation in a manner appropriate to the field in question. However, scholarship and artistic endeavor may take many forms, and the criteria for judging the original or imaginative nature of research or creative work must derive from current and generally accepted standards in the applicable discipline or professional area, as reflected in each college's performance criteria and standards document.

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<sup>1</sup> See Glassick, C. E. (2000). Boyer's expanded definitions of scholarship, the standards for assessing scholarship, and the elusiveness of the scholarship of teaching. *Academic Medicine*, 75(9), 877-880.

<sup>2</sup> See Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities for the Professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

#### 4. GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION OF PROFESSIONAL-TRACK FACULTY

4.1. Eligibility: Professional-track faculty who have completed a minimum of five years of service at the assistant rank are eligible to apply for promotion to the rank of associate. Similarly, professional-track faculty who have completed a minimum of five years of service at the associate rank are eligible to apply for promotion to the rank of senior. Promotions are awarded solely based on merit as indicated by a record of sustained excellence in the areas of responsibility assigned to the professional-track faculty member. Years of prior service in rank at another regionally accredited college or university may be credited to a professional-track faculty member at the time of initial appointment and will be documented in their appointment letter.

4.1.1. Early Promotion: In rare and exceptional instances, a professional-track faculty member with a record of exceptional teaching, scholarship/creative activity, service, and execution of professional responsibilities can request approval to apply for promotion in rank before they have completed five years of service at their current level. The faculty member must obtain written approval to apply early from their department chair, dean, and the provost. Following approval by the department chair, dean, and provost, once an applicant for early promotion has submitted their application, the application cannot be withdrawn, and it will be reviewed in accordance with the process outlined in section 4.4. Should the application for early promotion be unsuccessful, the faculty member will not be able to apply again until after they have completed the full five years of service at their current rank.

4.2. Minimum Expectations: Notwithstanding the various criteria established by the candidate's respective college, minimum university expectations and guidelines for promotion in rank for professional-track faculty are presented below.

4.2.1. Assistant: For an initial professional-track appointment at the assistant level the candidate must demonstrate competence in the subject matter of the courses to be taught or their professional responsibilities. This would include holding an appropriate, discipline-specific advanced degree, and either university teaching experience or related work experience indicating their potential for success based on the expectations of the individual position as outlined in the appointment letter.

4.2.2. Associate: The candidate must have completed a minimum of five years of service at the rank of assistant professional-track faculty member at an accredited college or university, must provide evidence of sustained competence and growth in the discipline, and must demonstrate contributions to teaching, professional responsibility, service, and scholarly or artistic endeavor commensurate with the expectations against which they are evaluated, which are outlined in the appointment letters. Evidence that the faculty member has both remained current and developed in their understanding of their discipline through scholarship or professional development should be present, though the appropriate amount and nature of the scholarship will be determined by their field, appointment letter, and the documented expectations of their supervisor, as well as college and department guidelines.

4.2.3. Senior: The rank of Senior is the crowning achievement of professional-track faculty and is exemplified by individuals who are outstanding among their peers and who have achieved additional distinction that is clearly above that of an

associate. The candidate for this rank must have completed a minimum of five years at the rank of associate professional-track faculty member; must provide evidence of mastery in the discipline and a record of sustained excellence and development in teaching, professional responsibility, service, and scholarly or artistic endeavor commensurate with the expectations outlined in their appointment letter, against which they are evaluated. Evidence that the faculty member has been continuously committed to remaining current in their discipline through scholarship or professional development should be present, though the appropriate amount and nature of the scholarship will be determined by their field, appointment letter, and the documented expectations of their supervisor, as well as college and department guidelines.

Exceptionally experienced and/or well-qualified professional-track faculty members may receive an initial appointment at a rank higher than assistant. Such appointments require the recommendation of the faculty member's dean and approval of the provost.

4.3. Application: The application packet for professional-track faculty applying for promotion will be developed and submitted in accordance with college and university guidelines. Candidates must submit an electronic portfolio in the approved portfolio management system by the application deadline (October 1st for candidates for promotion only), at which time review access will be granted to the appropriate reviewers by the Office of the Provost. Each portfolio must contain the items listed below

1. A copy of the current approved college, and if applicable, departmental standards
2. A current curriculum vitae that includes information on degrees and certifications, professional appointments, teaching, research, service, honors and awards, and other professional contributions
3. A self-evaluation, in which the candidate succinctly summarizes and provides general reflection about the information that is to follow in the portfolio
4. Copies of all annual performance evaluations conducted during the period under review;
5. Copies of all appointment letters that specify the expectations all requirements for teaching, research (or creative activity), service, and specified professional responsibilities that were communicated to the faculty
6. A section related to the candidate's teaching and/or professional responsibilities at the university during the period under review. For faculty with teaching responsibilities, this section must include at least the following:
  - a) The candidate's statement on teaching (teaching philosophy)
  - b) A list of all classes taught, with commentary on new course preparations, teaching innovations, instructional modalities, integration of technology, and course level (graduate or undergraduate)
  - c) Copies of all available official student evaluations from the last three years (including student comments from these evaluations as well as a statistical summary of and commentary on these data)
  - d) Data and commentary on the candidate's grade distributions from the last three years
  - e) Copies of teaching observations (classroom and/or online) conducted by a supervisor (chair or dean)
  - f) Copies of two different syllabi and at least three examples of other teaching

materials (e.g., handouts, examinations, assignments, rubrics, and discussion questions; faculty members who teach at both the graduate and undergraduate level should include at least one syllabus and teaching material item from each level)

- g) Evidence of engagement in professional development related to teaching
- h) Discussion of future plans related to teaching.

For faculty with professional responsibilities, this section must include at least the following:

- a) The candidate's description of their professional responsibilities;
  - b) Data from individuals served by the faculty member (e.g., students, customers, clients, etc.) indicating faculty's effectiveness at meeting professional responsibilities;
  - c) Evidence of engagement in professional development related to the area of professional responsibility; and
  - d) Discussion of future plans related to professional responsibilities.
7. A section related to the candidate's scholarship and/or creative activity, with notation that clearly identifies those items which were conducted or completed during the period under review and identifying those items conducted or completed at another institution. This section must include at least the following:
- a) A summary of the candidate's scholarship and/or creative activity;
  - b) Copies of publications, grant applications, or other materials that document and/or depict the candidate's scholarship within their discipline (candidates within disciplines for which books are the standard form of scholarship should include a copy of a representative chapter or excerpt; the candidate should include at least one scholarly/creative work that best represents their abilities);
  - c) Evidence that supports the quality of each work of scholarship within its respective discipline (this evidence may include such items as journal acceptance rate, citations, impact factor, quality of publisher or journal, editorial board membership, status of the publication within the candidate's discipline, evidence of published materials being used in an undergraduate or graduate course at another institution, etc.);
  - d) For any co-authored work, a description of the distinct contributions that were made by the candidate; and
  - e) Discussion of future plans related to scholarship.

Note: for professional-track faculty for whom there was no expectation of the creation of scholarly products or creative activities, this section should provide evidence supporting their efforts to maintain currency in their discipline through regular scholarly and/or creative activities. For those faculty, this section should include at least the following:

- a) A summary of the candidate's engagement in scholarly and creative activities to maintain currency in their discipline;
  - b) Evidence supporting documentation of the narrative provided regarding scholarly activities (e.g., continuing education certificates; copies of professional licensure, etc.); and
  - c) Discussion of future plans related to maintaining currency in one's discipline.
8. A section related to the candidate's service completed during the probationary

period or period under review. This section must include the following:

- a) An overview summary of the candidate's service to the university, to the profession, and/or wider community (See section 4.2);
- b) A list of all department, college, and university committees and/or task forces on which the candidate served during the probationary period or period under review, with a discussion of the candidate's contributions, as well as other service-related roles and functions within the university community (e.g., student organization advisor);
- c) A list of service to the profession and/or wider community, with a discussion of what contributions the candidate made and how this service relates to their faculty role;
- d) If applicable, any other service that relates to the faculty member's discipline, with a discussion of what contributions the candidate made and how this service relates to their faculty role; and
- e) Discussion of future plans related to service.

The candidate's department chair should work closely with the candidate to ensure that all required items listed above have been included in the portfolio.

4.4. Review Process: The formal review process will be identical to that described in University Rule *12.01.01.D1, Institutional Rule for Implementing Tenure and Promotion*, with the exception of committee membership. Each college-level review committee will include at least one professional-track faculty member at the associate or senior rank for the review of promotion applications from professional-track faculty in their college. Once a college has three professional-track faculty at the rank of senior eligible to serve on a college review committee, then any professional-track faculty below that rank must recuse themselves from the review of applications for promotion to the senior rank.

4.4.1. When a library faculty applies for promotion there will be no area-level review committee if there are not at least two faculty at the rank of associate or higher eligible to serve on an area-level review committee in their area.

## 5. DISMISSAL OF PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY

A professional-track faculty member whose term appointment has not expired can be dismissed for cause according to the guidelines and procedures set forth in System Policy *12.07, Fixed Term Academic Professional Track Faculty* and further outlined in System Policy *12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure* and University Procedure *12.01.99.D0.01 Dismissal for Cause*. A professional-track member may also be dismissed because of cases of bona fide financial exigency or the reduction or discontinuance of an institutional program based on educational considerations set forth in System Policy *12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure* and System Policy *12.07, Fixed Term Academic Professional Track Faculty*.

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## Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements (Required)

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System Policy 12.01 [Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure](#)

System Policy 12.07 [Fixed Term Academic Professional Track Faculty](#)

University Rule 12.01.01.D1 [Institutional Rules for Implementing Tenure and Promotion](#)

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## **Contact Office**

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