

Non-Tenure-Line
Administrative Guidelines
2023-2024

Changes from the previous version are highlighted in yellow.

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INTRODUCTION

These Non-Tenure-Line Administrative Guidelines are provided to implement the University's policy on academic ranks, AC21, and specifically non-tenure-line ranks and promotion. The Guidelines supplement but do not alter basic policies set forth in AC21. These Administrative Guidelines are revised periodically to reflect recommendations of faculty committees and administrators for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the review process.

DEFINITIONS

Unit executive: The budget executive associated with the unit, typically the dean, chancellor, or senior vice president for research.

Academic unit head: The first line administrator associated with a unit, typically the department head, director of academic affairs, division head, school director, or institute director.

Terminal degree: A degree that is considered to be the highest-level degree available in a particular field or discipline. In most cases, this will be a doctoral degree, although in some cases it may be a master's degree (such as an M.F.A.).

Non-terminal degree: A degree that is not considered to be the highest-level degree available in a particular field or discipline.

HIRING NON-TENURE-LINE FACULTY AT THE SECOND OR THIRD RANK OR WITH CREDIT

Units may hire non-tenure-line faculty at the second or third ranks, or with credit toward promotion, when the hire's accomplishments are in keeping with the criteria that the unit has developed for promotion to those ranks. Units should have in place guidelines for how these candidates are reviewed prior to being hired.

For credit toward promotion, the same principles that apply to tenure credit apply: units should determine the criteria that will guide the awarding of credit. No more than three years of credit should be awarded to those hired at the first rank. Approval for additional years of credit may be granted by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, who may consult with the provost as appropriate.

TRACKS FOR TERMINAL AND NON-TERMINAL DEGREES

Defining Terminal Degrees

In specifying ranks and titles available to non-tenure-line faculty AC21 states that assistant, associate, and full professors should possess a terminal degree "or its equivalent." Units should maintain a list of the degrees that are widely considered to be terminal in the academic fields that fall under the unit's umbrella. Equivalent experience should not be considered a substitute for a terminal degree.

A note about Professors of Practice: The Professor of Practice title falls under AC21 but does not follow the standard title/track conventions for non-tenure-line positions. Professors of Practice need not have a terminal degree and because they have extraordinary experiences that qualify them for this title, their experience should not be considered to be "equivalent" to a terminal degree.

Changing from Non-Terminal Degree Track to Terminal Degree Track

When a non-tenure-line faculty member attains a terminal degree, a change in “track” from the non-terminal degree track to the terminal degree track would not be considered a promotion, even if retitling occurs.

Non-Terminal Degree	Rank 1: Instructor/ Lecturer	Rank 2: Assistant Professor	Rank 3: Associate Professor	
Terminal Degree		Rank 1: Assistant Professor	Rank 2: Associate Professor	Rank 3: Professor

COMPOSITION OF NON-TENURE-LINE PROMOTION COMMITTEES

Department/Division/School/Campus. Although Policy AC21 references only unit-level (i.e., college) promotion committees, the same principles should apply to any department/division/school/campus-level committees that are constituted.

Number. Although not required, it is recommended that review committees be limited to a maximum of seven members. To avoid tie votes, it is also recommended that committees have an odd number of members. A tie vote is considered to be a negative recommendation.

Rank. Faculty serving on department/division/school/campus-level committees should be of a higher rank than the faculty whom they are reviewing for promotion. Specifically, AC21 states, “Only faculty of higher rank than the candidate should make recommendations about promotions. This implies, where unit-level guidelines permit, that faculty who do not have a terminal degree but who have been promoted to Associate (Teaching, Research or Clinical) Professor (i.e., the highest rank available to them) may serve on committees to consider promotion to (Teaching, Research or Clinical) Professor for candidates who do have a terminal degree.”

Professors of Practice. Units should determine whether professors of practice may serve on a non-tenure-line promotion committee.

Exceptions. Requests for exceptions to the composition of unit-level committees must be made to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. Exceptions will be made on an annual basis only and may not be part of a unit’s non-tenure-line guidelines. **Before requesting the exception**, the unit executive should consult with the non-tenure-line faculty in the unit to determine how they would like to handle a situation where there are not enough non-tenure-line faculty in a unit to serve on the committee. Options might include asking tenure-line or tenured faculty to serve on the committee or asking non-tenure-line faculty from another unit to serve on the committee.

PROMOTION REVIEW FOR FACULTY LOCATED IN AN ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

If a faculty member’s appointment is in an administrative unit such as a dean’s office, rather than in an academic unit, then their supervisor should participate in their promotion review in the role of the academic unit head as specified in the unit’s guidelines.

GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTION

Units should develop distinct, progressive criteria for promotion from rank to rank for teaching, clinical, and research professors.

Consistent with promotions for tenure-line faculty, non-tenure-line faculty may include in their dossiers research and creative accomplishments that span their careers. Unit promotion guidelines may, however, specify that recent research can be weighed more heavily by the unit's promotion committee. Units may permit faculty to submit all teaching documentation from the date of the last promotion forward, but given that promotions from the second to the third rank do not occur on a fixed schedule, up to 10 years of data since the last formal promotion review may be included.

THE PROMOTION DOSSIER

Preparation of the Dossier

Preparation of the dossier is a collaborative activity between the academic unit head and the faculty member, and a shared responsibility. The academic unit head will take the lead on setting a timeline for dossier completion and the faculty member will assemble whatever materials are in their possession by the timeline given by the academic unit head. If the unit is using Activity Insight to generate the dossier, it is the faculty member's responsibility to enter this information into Activity Insight in accordance with the timeline specified. When disputes about the preparation of the dossier arise, the faculty member may choose to reach out to the unit ombudsperson for assistance.

Job Description

The academic unit head, or supervisor if the faculty member is not located in an academic campus/department/division/school, must draft a position description for each faculty member and obtain input on that description from the faculty member no later than the conclusion of the academic year prior to the individual's promotion review year. Best practice is to create the job description during the onboarding process. Job descriptions should be revisited by the academic unit head/supervisor and the faculty member as needed or when job duties change. The job description should outline duties and expectations, if applicable, in the areas of teaching, research, and service. The job description should be included in the candidate's dossier.

Job descriptions are recommended, but not required, for non-tenure-line faculty going up for promotion during Academic Year 2023-24 and are required for promotions occurring in Academic Year 2024-25 and beyond.

WITHDRAWING A PROMOTION DOSSIER FROM CONSIDERATION

When a non-tenure-line faculty member is being reviewed for promotion to either the second or the third rank, once the dossier has been prepared, reviewed, and signed by the candidate and submitted to the first review committee for consideration, the dossier cannot be withdrawn before action by the dean, unless the candidate so desires. If the campus/department/division/school committee (if there is one) and the department/division head/school director/director of academic affairs do not support a promotion after reviewing the completed dossier, the candidate should be so informed and given the option of withdrawing their candidacy.

TIMING OF PROMOTIONS FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND RANK

AC21 states, “Non-tenure-line faculty should become eligible for promotion to the second rank after five years in rank, and would be permitted to compile their promotion dossiers in their fifth year.” While faculty may compile their dossiers in their fifth year, they may not be promoted until their sixth year. For example, if a faculty member was hired at the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year, then they may compile their dossier during the 2024-25 academic year and go through the promotion process during the 2025-26 academic year.

PROMOTION TIMELINE

Following is a timeline for non-tenure-line faculty promotions:

- May 15: Deans provide a list of promoted faculty to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
- Early June: List of promoted faculty is published

COMMUNICATING CONTRACT LENGTH WITH A PROMOTION

AC21 specifies that 1) unit leaders are encouraged to offer promoted faculty the longest contract term that circumstances warrant, 2) those promoted to the third rank shall be considered for the longest length of contract available, and 3) if a multi-year contract is not granted, the factors that shaped that decision shall be communicated to the faculty member. If, at the time of promotion, a unit is not able to offer a multi-year contract, then the unit should communicate in writing the reasons why a longer contract was not offered. Units are encouraged to be transparent with promoted faculty about the factors that shape the unit’s decision-making with regard to contract length (i.e., standard practice in the unit, budgetary concerns, etc.).

EARLY PROMOTION

“Early” promotions, i.e, promotions from the first to the second rank that occur before five years has elapsed, are different from out-of-sequence promotions and may occur with the approval of the unit executive.

OUT-OF-SEQUENCE PROMOTION OF NON-TENURE-LINE FACULTY MEMBERS

Requests and Applicability

A request for an out-of-sequence review must be made by the dean to the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. The dean should send the candidate’s CV along with a letter outlining the reason(s) why the review had not or could not be done in accordance with the regular timetable. Please note that out-of-sequence promotions occur primarily for retention purposes and at a time that differs from the standard promotion cycle.

Procedure

If approved by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, then a dossier, along with a letter from the dean, must be presented to the unit’s non-tenure-line promotion committee, consistent with the College’s non-tenure-line promotion guidelines.

To the extent possible, the same college (and department/division/school review committees, if applicable) that were appointed at the beginning of the review process will be convened to make

recommendations in cases of out-of-sequence reviews to the dean of the College. The dean will conduct their review of the out-of-sequence case keeping with their standard procedures. The candidate will receive a letter from the dean of the College awarding the new rank. In the event of a negative promotion review, the candidate will also receive a letter from the dean of the College.

Implementation Date for New Rank

As is the case for promotion decisions made in the regular sequence, new rank would be implemented at the start of the next academic year following the decision.

COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

Please refer to the document, "[Considerations for Non-tenure-line Promotions in the Time of COVID-19](#)" for information about documenting the impacts of COVID-19, alternative assessments of teaching, and the considerations for non-tenure-line promotion committees.