

USC Columbia Faculty Manual
Section 2/ Regulations and Policies

C. Professional-track Faculty and Related Policies

The University of South Carolina recognizes the importance and contribution of professional-track faculty to the educational, research, and service missions and success of the university. These professional-track faculty members are engaged in research, instruction both inside and outside the classroom, service, and/or administration. Professional-track faculty members are not eligible for tenure nor does any of the time spent in a professional-track position count toward the probationary period for tenure.

Appointments of professional-track faculty shall be in writing and shall specify the beginning and ending date of appointment, typically for terms of one to five years, with reappointment possible based on satisfactory performance and available funding. If a professional-track faculty member is appointed without a specified ending date, notice of non-reappointment shall be given in writing to the faculty member at least twelve months prior to the termination date. See [ACAF 1.16 Professional-track Faculty](#) for further detail about notice of appointment and reappointment.

C.1 Faculty titles and qualifications

Professional-track faculty have highly varied responsibilities as indicated by titles, qualifications, and workload distribution. This section presents titles and qualifications associated with FTE positions, although the same titles and qualifications may be applicable to non-FTE positions. Further detail about titles and qualifications, along with additional part-time and honorific titles, can be found in [ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Staff Positions](#). Qualifications for appointment, set forth below, are not intended as justification for automatic promotion; conversely, justified exceptions may be made.

C.1.1 Instructional faculty

The primary responsibility of an individual appointed as an instructor, lecturer or teaching professor is teaching; however, other duties may be assigned. Instructional faculty appointments are regular, full-time or part-time appointments of individuals of substantial professional caliber to supervise and instruct students in classroom or laboratory settings and/or to engage in practice and outreach, and/or have substantial professional caliber to administer academic programs and other administrative activities. Instructional faculty usually have a terminal degree unless noted below.

- (a) Teaching Professor: An individual appointed as a Teaching Professor must have a record of outstanding instruction and student mentorship, and have at least nine years of effective, relevant experience. This rank is reserved for individuals with proven stature in instructional roles.

- (b) Teaching Associate Professor: An individual appointed as a Teaching Associate Professor must have a record of effective professional performance, have at least 5 years of effective, relevant experience and have strong potential for further development as an instructor and student mentor.
- (c) Teaching Assistant Professor: An individual appointed as a Teaching Assistant Professor must have strong potential for development as an instructor and student mentor.
- (d) Master Instructor or Master Lecturer: Promotion to master instructor or master lecturer requires the equivalent of 10 years of full-time teaching experience and a record of outstanding instruction as reflected in student course evaluations and peer review of teaching. Initial appointment may not be made at this rank.
- (e) Senior Instructor or Senior Lecturer: An individual appointed as or promoted to the rank of Senior Instructor or Senior Lecturer must have the equivalent of six years of full-time teaching experience in higher education and evidence of effective instruction as reflected in student course evaluations and peer review of teaching.
- (f) Instructor or Lecturer: To be eligible for appointment at the rank of instructor, a faculty member normally is expected to possess a master's degree in the teaching discipline or a master's degree with a concentration in the teaching discipline (a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline).
- (g) Legal Writing Instructor: An individual appointed as Legal Writing Instructor is expected to possess at least a juris doctor degree.

C.1.2 Clinical faculty

Clinical Faculty appointments are regular, full-time or part-time appointments of individuals of substantial professional caliber to supervise and instruct students in clinical, field, classroom, or laboratory settings, and/or to engage in practice and outreach, and/or have substantial professional caliber to administer academic programs and other administrative activities. Clinical faculty usually have an earned medical or terminal degree unless noted below. Education, certification, and licensure of an individual must meet the minimum regulatory requirements of the respective accrediting agency or board. The accrediting organization must be recognized by the U. S. Department of Education. According to individual circumstances, faculty in these positions may or may not be salaried.

- (a) Clinical Professor: An individual appointed as a Clinical Professor must have a record of outstanding professional performance, and have at least nine years of effective, relevant professional experience. This rank is reserved for individuals with proven stature as a clinician or practitioner.
- (b) Clinical Associate Professor: An individual appointed as a Clinical Associate Professor must have a record of effective, relevant professional performance, have at least five years of effective relevant professional experience, and have strong potential for further development as a clinician or practitioner.
- (c) Clinical Assistant Professor: An individual appointed as a Clinical Assistant Professor must have strong potential for development as a clinician or practitioner.

- (d) Master Clinical Instructor or Master Clinical Lecturer: The title of master clinical instructor or master clinical lecturer requires the equivalent of 10 years of full-time relevant clinical, practice and/or teaching experience and a record of outstanding performance in these areas. Initial appointment may not be made at this rank.
- (e) Clinical Senior Instructor or Clinical Senior Lecturer: An individual appointed as or promoted to the rank of Clinical Senior Instructor or Clinical Senior Lecturer must have a minimum of six years of higher education experience and effective performance in the areas of responsibility.
- (f) Clinical Instructor or Clinical Lecturer: An individual appointed as a Clinical Instructor or Clinical Lecturer is expected to possess at least a master's degree in the teaching discipline or at least a master's degree with a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline.

C.1.3 Research faculty

Research faculty appointments are regular, full-time or part-time appointments of individuals who have research expertise and experience and evidence of scholarly accomplishment. Research faculty will be engaged primarily in independent research such as serving as principal investigator or co-principal investigator on externally funded research and having significant refereed publications. Research faculty should have a terminal degree, usually the earned doctorate.

- (a) Research Professor: An individual appointed as a research professor must be recognized internationally/nationally in his/her field and have at least nine years of effective, relevant experience. This rank is reserved for individuals with proven stature in research.
- (b) Research Associate Professor: An individual appointed as a research associate professor must have an established reputation in his/her field, have at least five years of relevant experience, and demonstrate potential for further development.
- (c) Research Assistant Professor: An individual appointed as a research assistant professor must have research expertise in his/her field.

C.1.4 Professor of practice

A Professor of Practice appointment is a full-time or part-time appointment of an individual engaged in instruction, creative work, and leadership in professional practice. The individual must have a proven reputation in professional achievement and expertise, experience, and international/national recognition in his/her professional field. Professors of Practice usually have a master's degree in the teaching discipline or a master's degree with a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline. The title of Professor of Practice is used only on rare occasions and must have prior approval through the provost and president.

C.2 Criteria and Procedures for Promotion

The university is committed to achievement in research (including scholarship and/or creative activity in visual and performing arts), teaching, and service. This commitment extends to interdisciplinary research, teaching, and service. Collectively, the faculty profile of the university and of any academic unit should reflect performance consistent with that of major research universities.

C.2.1 Unit Promotions Committee

Each academic unit shall determine the constitution of the committee charged with establishing appointment and promotion criteria for professional-track faculty and with evaluating candidate applications. When possible, the committee should be comprised primarily of professional-track faculty, but given the needs and faculty distribution within the unit, tenured faculty may also be eligible to serve. At least two-thirds of the committee must be professional-track faculty. If a unit has fewer than five eligible faculty members at the appropriate rank, the unit must submit to the University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty a policy for constituting a professional-track faculty committee with at least five members of the appropriate rank from another academic unit.

By April 15 of each year, each unit professional-track faculty committee shall elect a chair for the upcoming year and report the chair's name to the Offices of the Provost and the Faculty Senate.

C.2.2 Formulation of Unit Criteria and Procedures

The faculty of each academic unit shall formulate specific written criteria and procedures for professional-track appointments and promotions that are consistent with the professional responsibilities of the faculty member. The criteria and procedures shall clearly communicate to faculty members the unit's expectations concerning performance in the areas applicable to their appointment and workload allocation, including the nature and quality of the various scholarly activities necessary to attain promotion. These criteria and procedures must be consistent with the Faculty Manual and the guidelines established by the University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty (UCPTF). In the event of inconsistency between UCPTF guidelines and the Faculty Manual, the Faculty Manual is to be considered the final authority.

The UCPTF does not prescribe specific criteria for any unit. The unit must devise its own criteria according to its particular needs, the needs of unit faculty, the standards of the field, and the aspirations of the university.

In developing criteria, an underlying principle is the university's commitment to achievement in research (including scholarship and/or creative activity in visual and performing arts), teaching, and service. Professional-track faculty may have widely differing terms of appointment depending on the mission of the unit and the faculty member's strengths and qualifications; unit criteria for promotion of professional-track faculty should reflect the diversity of these faculty appointments and provide for clear pathways for promotion.

Unit criteria should provide an overview of the unit's mission, emphasis, and range of responsibilities for professional-track faculty within the unit; materials should be clearly written for both audiences within the unit and outside it, including external reviewers when appropriate.

C.2.3 General standards for assessment of faculty

Unit criteria promotion shall provide clear standards for the assessment of past achievements of the faculty member. If unit criteria use adjectival standards to rate candidates' performance, the following terminology shall be used: outstanding, excellent, good, fair, and unacceptable. Definitions of these terms may be varied to meet the needs of the individual unit, but should be generally consistent with the following:

- Outstanding: The candidate's performance is far above the minimally effective level as defined by unit criteria.
- Excellent: The candidate significantly exceeds the minimally effective level of performance.
- Good: The candidate's performance is clearly above the minimally effective level.
- Fair: The candidate meets the minimally effective level of performance.
- Unacceptable: The candidate has accomplished less than the minimally effective level of performance.

Criteria for professional-track faculty promotion decisions shall require a record of accomplishment indicative of continuing development of the faculty member in the designated areas of primary responsibility.

Unit criteria for promotion to any professional-track associate professor shall require, at a minimum, evidence of excellence in the area of primary responsibility and good in all other areas and, if applicable to the rank and position of the faculty member, evidence of progress toward establishing a national or international reputation in a field. Criteria for promotion from professional-track associate professor to professor shall require, at a minimum, evidence of excellence in most areas of responsibility, and evidence of regional, national or international stature in a field.

Minimum criteria for promotion of instructors and lecturers are provided in the descriptions above.

Evaluation of Teaching. Procedures for the evaluation of classroom teaching must require peer and student evaluations, conducted periodically throughout the faculty member's appointment at the university. A summary and evaluation of the faculty member's classroom teaching, based on clearly specified criteria, must be included in the faculty member's promotion file. This summary should give context to student evaluations of the faculty member's classroom teaching by noting, e.g., whether evaluations of a particular class historically have been low; in a multi-section course, how the faculty member's evaluation scores compare with those in the other sections of the same or similar courses; or whether poor evaluation scores are correlated to a faculty member's strict grading standards.

Other teaching functions and the weight to be given to them in evaluating teaching performance must be specified in the unit criteria. These may include, but are not limited to, advisement and mentoring of students and student organizations; creation of teaching materials, techniques or programs; supervision of

PhD students; supervision of clinical and practical experiences; and supervision of research or independent study by undergraduate or masters-level students.

Evaluation of Research and Scholarship. Unit procedures for the evaluation of the research component of the file may require that evaluations of the candidate's research and scholarship be obtained from impartial scholars at peer or aspirant institutions within the field, outside the University of South Carolina system. External reviewers should normally already hold at least the rank status for which the candidate is applying and be currently active, productive researchers, scholars, or artists. If a person can be shown to be one of the leading scholars in a particular field, that person may be used as an outside evaluator even if he or she is at an institution that is not peer or aspirant. Non-university specialists may be used as outside evaluators if allowed by unit procedures; however, the majority of evaluators normally must be persons with academic affiliations. Persons who have co-authored publications, collaborated on research, or been colleagues or advisors of the applicant normally should be excluded from consideration as outside evaluators. All evaluators must be asked to disclose any relationship or interaction with the applicant. The outside evaluators must be selected by the unit except as provided below for jointly appointed faculty.

Each evaluator should be provided with a letter requesting the evaluation and informing the evaluator of the unit's relevant criteria for tenure or promotion, the candidate's vita and publications, and other materials evidencing the candidate's research or such portion of the candidate's research as the evaluator is being asked to evaluate. The same set of materials should be sent to all reviewers. The evaluator will be asked to evaluate the quality of the research and scholarship, including the quality of publication venues. Where appropriate, the evaluator will be asked to evaluate the quantity of the candidate's research and scholarship.

A summary of the professional qualifications of each outside evaluator or a copy of each evaluator's curriculum vita must be included in the file, along with a copy of the letter sent to the evaluator.

Evaluation of Clinical, Practice and Other Activities. Unit procedures must specify evidence and expected standards of effective performance in clinical and practice activities and other service and outreach responsibilities as applicable for the unit's professional-track faculty positions.

C.3 Identification of Applicable Criteria

In the letter of appointment, persons offered or transferred into professional-track positions must be informed of the evaluation and promotion regulations applicable to the position. Any change in these regulations prior to the effective date of the appointment must be communicated to, and receipt acknowledged by, the new faculty member in writing and made a part of the faculty member's official record. When new unit criteria are approved, professional-track faculty have a period of two years from the effective date of approval during which they may apply for promotion under either criteria. After this two-year period, all faculty must apply under the most recently approved criteria.

Each unit shall maintain copies of all available versions of the unit criteria, each indicating the effective date of approval. Each unit shall submit copies of all available versions of the unit's

criteria to the Office of the Provost, which shall maintain a central repository of all available unit criteria, both current and historic.

C.4 Review of Promotion Files

C.4.1 Evaluating Performance with Consideration of Workload Allocation.

Criteria for all appointment and promotion decisions should require a record of accomplishment indicative of continuing development of the faculty member in the broad areas of teaching, research, and service, as applicable to the rank and to the faculty member's workload allocation. Further, unit criteria should state explicitly if unit requirements for rank include responsibilities in all three areas, or primarily in one or more areas.

Individual faculty members' contractual professional responsibilities are also relevant in the evaluation process. For example, an instructor may have only teaching responsibilities, or may have a distribution with teaching as the primary responsibility, but with some service or research expectations. Likewise, a research associate professor may be fully committed to research with no instructional responsibilities and only minimal service obligations. As a result, evaluation of an individual professional-track faculty member's performance may incorporate one, two, or all three areas of teaching, research and scholarship, and service, as appropriate for the faculty member's contractual professional responsibilities. Further, the individual faculty member's workload allocation may also vary from year to year as professional responsibilities change; annual reviews should focus on the specific effort allocated for that review period, while promotion review will accordingly take into consideration the shifting allocation of effort over the full review period.

Units are encouraged to consider formal workload allocation documentation in appointment and promotion as appropriate, but in all cases, faculty should be evaluated only on the areas of professional responsibilities that are defined in their appointments and workload allocations. The weight of the evaluation in each area should be commensurate with the allocation of duties.

C.4.2 Minimum Years of Service Prior to Promotion.

See Section C.1 Faculty titles and qualifications for details on minimum time in rank. Unit criteria may define a more stringent requirement regarding minimum term of service.

Leave. Time during which the faculty member is on leave for a period equivalent to one semester or more, either with or without pay, will not be included in the review period, nor should the faculty member be penalized for any corresponding gap in the professional record.

Candidate Eligibility and Notification, and Review Calendar. At the unit level, all professional-track faculty who have completed the minimum time in rank specified in both the Faculty Manual and unit promotion criteria, and who have met the unit criteria for rank advancement, can be considered for promotion.

Potential candidates for promotion will be advised in writing of their eligibility for tenure or promotion by the dean, department chair or other appropriate administrator no later than October 1 for the current academic year promotion cycle. A faculty member who intends to apply for promotion must so inform the dean, department chair, or other appropriate administrator no later than October 15. Compliance with these deadlines is critical for file preparation and solicitation of external reviewers; exceptions should be approved by the Office of the Provost. Each unit must provide the provost with a list of those faculty members who intend to apply for promotion by no later than November 15. Following unit review, complete candidate files with all ballots and recommendations must be submitted to the Office of the Provost by no later than the following May 1. Under normal circumstances, professional-track faculty promotions are effective August 16 of the next academic year. Each unit should publish a calendar of unit-specific deadlines and ensure that these deadlines are communicated to candidates well in advance.

C.4.3 Consideration of Promotion Files

Compiling the File. A candidate and the academic unit should follow UCPTF guidelines for compiling files. The record of teaching, research, and service shall be thoroughly documented, as prescribed in the UCPTF guidelines. As appropriate for the candidate's distribution of effort, the unit is responsible for providing a synthesis of evaluations of the candidate's teaching performance and/or, if applicable, obtaining at least five evaluations of the candidate file from eligible reviewers outside of the University of South Carolina system. The unit professional-track faculty review committee is additionally responsible for assuring that the correct criteria are used and that the file is assembled in a manner consistent with UCPTF guidelines.

Notice of Unit Committee Meeting. The dean and the unit chair or other appropriate administrator shall be notified by the unit committee chair of the pending meeting of the committee. However, any administrator who will be making an administrative recommendation in a promotion case shall not attend the meeting or participate in the discussion at which the case is considered by the unit promotion committee unless invited by the committee chair.

Voting. Each unit shall apply its criteria and procedures to determine whether a candidate qualifies for promotion. With regard to promotion recommendations, all committee members of rank equal to or higher than the candidate shall vote by secret ballot; provided, that any otherwise eligible faculty member who has a conflict of interest or a family or other close personal relationship with the candidate that could affect his or her objectivity shall not vote or otherwise participate in the process. Each member eligible to vote shall vote "yes" or "no" or "abstain." Whether an

abstention vote counts towards the total votes for candidates in determining an appropriate majority shall be decided at the unit level. A record of the votes is made in all instances and must be forwarded through appropriate channels. Written justification of all votes at the unit level shall be mandatory and shall state specifically how the candidate meets or does not meet the unit's criteria.

Affirmative Recommendations at the Unit Level. A candidate's file will be sent forward if the unit promotions committee recommends promotion.

Negative Recommendations at the Unit Level. Upon written request of a candidate dissatisfied with any negative decision on promotion by the unit professional-track faculty promotions committee, the unit committee shall send that candidate's file through all appropriate channels for endorsement to the provost for appropriate action. Failure to recommend a candidate favorably for promotion is without prejudice with respect to future consideration. Unit criteria should state procedures for recourse for any candidate dissatisfied with any negative decision. At the conclusion of an appeal following unit procedures, all persons dissatisfied with the decision regarding promotion may submit an appeal to the University Faculty Appellate Panel.

Recommendation of Unit Administrator. Recommendations from the unit promotions committee, including the recording of votes and all written comments, are forwarded to the unit chair or other appropriate administrator. The unit chair or other appropriate administrator shall vote "yes" or "no" or "abstain" and shall forward their vote with written justification, along with all other recommendations, statements, and endorsements to the dean. Unit chairs or other administrators who choose to vote on promotion cases as members of their respective promotion committees may not then make further recommendations on cases at other points in the process. In other words, individuals are allowed to influence outcomes at only one point in the process.

Review by Provost. Promotion is recommended by the dean and approved by the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost. If the unit reports to a vice president, the vice president should also provide a recommendation. For promotion to the rank of professor, approval by the president is required. For all other faculty ranks, the provost's approval is final.

Unit Committee Consideration of Appointments at Rank of Professor. The dean as the college-level hiring authority has the authority to offer appointment for most professional-track faculty titles without additional approvals. Candidates for faculty appointment as teaching professor, clinical professor, research professor, or professor of practice requires a favorable vote of those eligible to vote as defined in the unit criteria and recommendation of the unit head, dean, and provost. Written approval through academic channels by the president is required before an offer can be extended for the position of teaching professor, clinical professor, research professor; or professor of practice.