



# McCausland College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**POLICY: Appointment and Review of Department Chairs and Directors**

**DATE: August 16, 2025 (Revised)**

## I. POLICY

This policy applies to all units within the McCausland College of Arts and Sciences. The College policy is subordinate to related policies outlined in the [University of South Carolina Faculty Manual](#). In case of inconsistencies between this policy and the university, state, or federal policies, the university, state, or federal policy rules are the final authority.

## II. SEARCH PROCESS

Within the McCausland College of Arts and Sciences, searches for department chairs and academic program directors are governed by [University Policy ACAF 1.01 Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Administrators](#).

Following approval from the Provost, the search process begins with a formal message from the Dean notifying the unit faculty of their intent to initiate a search for a new chair or director.

### A. Search Committee Nomination and Election

In accordance with [University Policy ACAF 1.01](#):

*When a vacancy occurs in the position of department chair or school director, the dean of the college or school shall notify the faculty of the department or school and shall invite the faculty to elect up to three persons to serve on a search committee.*

*The dean shall indicate the proportion of tenured, pre-tenure, and professional-track faculty on the search committee.*

*The dean may appoint one to two additional persons, one of whom shall serve as chair of the search committee and at least one of whom shall be a member of the faculty of another department or academic unit.*

Once the committee is confirmed, the Dean will commence the search by charging the Search Committee.

## **B. Identification of Candidates**

### **1. Internal Searches: Candidate Nomination Process**

- a) Once the search committee has been convened, the Search Committee Chair will instruct faculty members in the unit to self-nominate or submit nominations for a new chair or director.
- b) The person nominated must agree to the nomination before candidates are announced. The number of nominations for each candidate is not to be revealed.
- c) The Search Committee Chair will speak individually with the nominees and invite them to meet with the committee.

### **2. External Searches: Candidate Application Process**

In collaboration with McCausland College of Arts and Sciences' Office of Human Resources, an advertisement will be created and posted for the chair/director position. Applications for external chair/director searches will be received and shared with the Search Committee via the standard process for faculty hiring.

## **C. Candidate Presentations**

### **1. Internal Searches: Unit Faculty Meeting for Nominee Presentations**

- a) The Search Committee Chair will call a meeting of the faculty, including all members of the search committee, for the Chair/Director nominee presentations.
- d) Each nominee provides their thoughts on the position to the faculty and staff in a brief presentation, followed by Q&A. During each candidate's presentation session, the other candidate(s) must not be present.
- e) Each candidate must also be scheduled to meet individually with the Dean.

### **2. External Searches: Candidate Interviews and Campus Visits**

- a) In collaboration with the Office of the Dean, the search committee will conduct preliminary interviews and select finalists for campus visits.
- b) Each finalist must prepare a brief presentation for unit faculty and related college faculty, staff, and students, followed by a questions and answer period
- c) Each candidate is also be scheduled to meet individually with the Dean.

#### D. Confidentiality

All information submitted to the committee throughout the process, including the final vote, must be kept confidential.

#### E. Professional-Track Faculty

In accordance with [University Policy ACAF 1.01](#):

*All full-time faculty are allowed to participate fully unless otherwise indicated in the unit bylaws or similar unit policy. Votes are be reported separately to the Dean.*

#### F. Unit Staff

Unit staff must be included in the candidate interview process and provide feedback on the candidates. Unit staff feedback is to be collected confidentially by the Chair of the Committee and reported directly to the unit's Associate Dean.

#### G. Ballot Format and Distribution

A sample ballot is below. Faculty must rank only the candidates they find acceptable. Ballots may be signed or unsigned.

Electronic balloting follows the [process outlined for tenure and promotion review](#) (Page 10).

It is highly recommended that a brief narrative justification be included with each ballot.

<u>Chair Vote</u>	Acceptable	Unacceptable	Ranking if Acceptable
Person A	-	-	-
Person B	-	-	-
Person C	-	-	-
Person D	-	-	-
Person E	-	-	-

The committee should ensure that partners of candidates are not involved in any stage of the search process. In accordance with [University Policy HR 1.27: Nepotism](#), partners of candidates may not vote.

## H. Reporting Vote Results

The search committee shall tabulate *all* faculty votes and present only the unranked names of the acceptable candidates to faculty. *Vote tallies are not to be revealed to faculty.*

## I. Search Results

The Dean receives the actual ballots and justifications from all faculty as well as the vote tally from the search committee chair. Votes of tenured and pre-tenured faculty are tallied and reported separately from professional-track faculty. Associate Deans will relay staff comments directly to the Dean.

In accordance with [University Policy ACAF 1.01](#):

*If two or more candidates are acceptable to a majority of the participating faculty, the committee shall forward their names, along with all letters of recommendation and other materials received, to the dean. If there are not at least two acceptable candidates, the dean shall have the option of requesting a full report on all candidates or instructing the committee to resume the search.*

*The dean will either appoint a candidate of choice, ask the committee to submit additional names, or dissolve the search committee and begin the search process again. The Chair/Director serves at the discretion of the Dean.*

## J. Appointment

Department chairs and directors will be appointed in writing by the Dean. Appointment letters will specify the term of appointment.

## III. POSITION DESCRIPTION

In accordance with the [The Faculty Manual](#):

*Department chairs are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the dean of a school or college. The dean notifies the provost of the appointment of department chairs.*

*The chair has a responsibility to departmental faculty in matters relating to teaching and research and is responsible also to the dean of the college and other officers of the university for implementing university policies as they apply to the affairs of the department.*

*The department chair is responsible for the general conduct of departmental affairs and reports to the dean of the college or school.*

*The chair is responsible for appointments and non reappointments, [annual reviews of faculty], promotions and tenure, except as delegated to the faculty in the Faculty Manual, resource*

*allocation, and all other matters relative to the successful implementation of the department's educational and scholarly objectives in accordance with university policies. The chair will consult with and seek the advice of appropriate committees of the faculty with respect to educational policy and departmental governance.*

*Chairs and directors should further create a collegial atmosphere . They should be committed to academic and research excellence and support the professional growth of the faculty, students, and staff under their purview.*

#### **IV. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

The performance expectations outlined below form the basis for the annual review and evaluation of chairs and directors during their terms of appointment.

##### **A. Department chairs, school directors, and program directors are expected to:**

1. Conduct themselves in a manner that reflects favorably on the University of South Carolina, exhibiting high ethical standards and integrity in professional behavior.
2. Provide professional leadership to the unit and foster community among faculty, staff, and students.
3. Display a sound understanding of administrative responsibilities. Keep abreast of issues and policies affecting areas of responsibility through interactions with the Office of the Dean, other units and programs within the College, and other University of South Carolina colleges, offices, and campuses.
4. Exercise sound administrative judgment, efficiently and thoroughly making wise and fair use of financial and human resources in achieving academic unit goals while staying within the unit budget.
5. Confront difficulties in a positive manner and effectively mediate conflict.
6. Communicate effectively. Regularly consult and accept input and suggestions from others and act fairly and objectively in decisions across your unit.
7. Encourage and support academic excellence in instruction, advising, program curriculum, and assessment.
8. Encourage and support excellence in research and creative work.
9. Maintain a research and/or teaching career in the discipline.

## V. ANNUAL REVIEW

Department chairs and directors, including those on interim appointments, will be evaluated annually by the Office of the Dean.

Timeline:

- A. **January 15:** All chairs and directors submit to the Dean's Office a brief report of their *administrative activities* (2 pages) together with a summary of their *individual activities* in research, teaching, and service as faculty members. In addition, chairs and directors with tenure homes must also submit their *individual activities' reports* to their home department following their unit's review process. Reports cover activities from January 1 to December 31 of the preceding year.
- B. Unit faculty and staff may submit confidential letters or comments about their chair or director's performance to the appropriate associate dean. Evaluation surveys may be distributed in conjunction with the annual review at the dean's discretion.
- C. **June 30:** The dean will send a review letter to the chair/director, noting the year's achievements and, if applicable, outlining expectations for the upcoming year.

## VI. REAPPOINTMENT REVIEW

The Dean may reappoint a chair/director for a second term following a full review that includes consultation with the unit faculty. Reappointment is normally for one term, with any additional terms being the rare exception.

Reviews are typically conducted in the fall semester, following this general timeline:

- A. **October 15:** The unit chair/director submits a brief report (2 pages) to their Associate Dean summarizing their *administrative activities* over the entirety of their administrative term.
- B. **October - November:** The Associate Dean will convene a Reappointment Review Committee elected by the unit. Note that elected standing committees may be used for the elected members (e.g., the Tenure and Promotion Committee). In either case, at least one member is appointed by the unit Associate Dean. Professional-track faculty should be represented on the Reappointment Review Committee if the unit contains these faculty ranks. All information submitted to the committee in this process, including survey data and comments, must be kept confidential. The chair will receive the Review Committee's narrative report but not the survey data or individual comments or letters.

- C. **November:** The Office of the Dean will send the Reappointment Review Committee chair three online evaluation survey links, for (1) tenured and pre-tenure faculty, (2) professional-track faculty, and (3) unit staff. The Review Committee chair will then distribute accordingly, copying the Associate Dean for their unit on all communications. The Review Committee chair should send follow-up reminders to ensure participation. The surveys will be open for two weeks.

To ensure confidentiality, professional-track faculty and unit staff survey invitations will note that survey results will be reviewed at the college level only by the Associate Dean and not shared with the evaluation committee or the chair/director.

Unit faculty and staff may also submit confidential letters directly to the appropriate Associate Dean.

- D. **November-December:** Aggregate data from the tenured and pre-tenure faculty will be sent to the Reappointment Review Committee chair, who will work with the committee to generate a summary report on the survey data. The summary report will be due to the unit's associate dean within two weeks of receiving the survey data.

Survey data from the professional-track faculty and staff will be sent directly to the unit's Associate Dean.

- E. **December:** Reappointment Review Committee summary report due to unit's Associate Dean.
- F. **December-January:** After reviewing the committee's summary report, the survey results, and confidential letters, the Dean and Associate Dean will meet with Chair/Director and provide formal notification of reappointment or non-reappointment. The Chair/Director will receive a copy of the unit's evaluative summary.

## VII. RELATED POLICIES

[ACAF Policy 1.01 Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Administrators](#)