

12.07 Fixed Term Academic Professional Track Faculty

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Policy Statement

This policy establishes an option for the universities (academic institutions) of The Texas A&M University System (system) to provide long-term stable academic positions for non-tenure track faculty whose focus is heavily weighted toward either teaching or research.

Reason for Policy

Faculty who have a singular focus or area of expertise in teaching, research or service may experience impediments meeting the necessary requirements of the tenure track process and, as a result, are restricted to positions with little or no long-term stability. This policy is designed to provide a means to recruit and retain faculty whose excellence in teaching, research or service make them beneficial members of the system academic institution, while providing them with stable, long-term employment.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. FACULTY DIFFERENTIATION

- 1.1 It is imperative that members of the faculty at system academic institutions are able to meet and sustain the highly competitive requirements necessary to excel in their positions. The granting of tenure is a recognition of excellence in the areas of teaching, research **and** service (See System Policy *12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure*). And, while system academic institutions are able to recognize the contributions that these individuals make, it is also essential that recognition be given to faculty whose interest, excellence or discipline does not include all three areas required for tenure.
- 1.2 The creation of the non-tenure track of Assistant Professional Track Faculty, Associate Professional Track Faculty, and Senior Professional Track Faculty provides a means of securing and retaining faculty who bring to the system academic institution excellence in teaching, research **or** service. This would include faculty whose position is in applied or clinical settings. These individuals provide a specific, professional skill to the system academic institution, faculty, staff and students. In creating these new

ranks, the system academic institution is acknowledging that its skills are an essential part to the overall success of the system academic institution and its mission.

2. PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY RANKS

- 2.1 Assistant Professional Track Faculty. This is an entry-level rank. Appointment to this rank generally requires the appropriate terminal degree. Promotion criteria include excellence in teaching for faculty with teaching responsibilities, or excellence in research or service, as appropriate for other appointments. Overall superior performance and potential for development are also expected as criteria for promotion.
- 2.2 Associate Professional Track Faculty. Appointment to this rank generally requires the appropriate terminal degree. It also requires significant experience related to the position responsibilities. Individuals holding the rank of Assistant Professional Track Faculty are eligible to be considered for promotion to the rank of Associate Professional Track Faculty after at least five years as an Assistant Professional Track Faculty.
- 2.3 Senior Professional Track Faculty. Appointment to this rank generally requires the appropriate terminal degree and a record of sustained excellent performance in all areas of appointment. Individuals holding the rank of Associate Professional Track Faculty are eligible to be considered for promotion to the rank of Senior Professional Track Faculty after at least five years as an Associate Professional Track Faculty.
- 2.4 System academic institutions may adopt titles that vary from those listed above as long as they are differentiated from tenure track faculty titles.

3. APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY

- 3.1 All new Professional Track faculty members shall be provided with an appointment letter stating the initial terms and conditions of employment. Any subsequent modifications or special understandings in regard to the appointment, which may be made on an annual basis, should be stated in writing and a copy given to the faculty member. The appointment letter shall explicitly indicate the necessary teaching, research and/or service requirements expected of the Professional Track faculty member. Essential job functions for a position may vary depending upon the nature of the department in which the faculty member holds expertise, external funding requirements attached to the position, licensing or accreditation requirements, and other circumstances. It is, therefore, important that essential job functions for each faculty position be listed in the initial appointment letter. For example, all of the following that are applicable should be listed: teaching responsibilities, responsibilities for advising students, independent and/or collaborative research responsibilities, engaging in patient care, committee assignments, conditions imposed by external accrediting agencies, conditions for holding a named professorship or endowed chair, or a position that combines academic and administrative duties, and any other specific essential functions for the position in question. All appointment letters must indicate that the appointment is non-tenure track, and will expire upon the completion of the appointment, unless the appointment is extended pursuant to Section 3.2 of this policy, or unless the faculty member is dismissed pursuant to Section 5 of this policy.

- 3.2 Professional Track faculty member appointments may be made for periods not to exceed five years in length. If, during the course of an existing appointment, the system academic institution chooses to extend the duration of an existing appointment, the extension may not exceed an additional five years. For beginning Assistant Professional Track Faculty, an appointment of no more than three years may be appropriate.
- 3.3 The system academic institution shall notify faculty members annually, in writing, of their salary. Any other changes or additions to the appointment also should be included.
- 3.4 Faculty members are expected to fulfill the terms and conditions of employment for the following year unless they resign prior to thirty (30) calendar days after receiving notice of the terms. This provision should be included in all letters of appointment and annual reviews.

4. EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY

All Professional Track academic faculty will be reviewed on an annual basis by their department head or supervisor. Such review will include all requirements established in the initial letter of appointment and any additional requirements added during annual reviews.

5. DISMISSAL OF A PROFESSIONAL TRACK FACULTY MEMBER

- 5.1 Professional Track Faculty members whose appointment has not expired may be dismissed for cause on the same basis that tenured faculty may be dismissed for cause under System Policy *12.01*, Section 4.3.
- 5.2 System academic institutions shall follow System Policy *12.01*, Section 6, when dismissing a Professional Track faculty member for cause.
- 5.3 Professional Track faculty members may be placed on administrative leave pending investigation as described in System Policy *12.01*, Section 5.
- 5.4 Professional Track faculty are subject to the provisions of System Policy *12.01*, Section 9, relating to financial exigency or termination or reduction of existing programs, and may be dismissed subject to this policy.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

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

Member Rule Requirements

No rule is required to supplement this policy.

Contact Office

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