

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM**

SECTION: Academic Affairs

NUMBER: 06.A.09

AREA: General

SUBJECT: Academic Personnel Policies

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To accomplish the educational mission and goals of the University of Houston System and its universities, it is essential that each university appoint competent and qualified faculty. For accreditation purposes, the University of Houston System is guided by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS COC), our institutional regional accrediting body. Guidance regarding appropriate qualifications and credentials for teaching are set out in the [SACS COC Faculty Credentials Guidelines](#).
- 1.2. This administrative memorandum specifies policies and procedures governing various academic personnel actions utilized by the [University of Houston System](#) and its universities. It delineates policies and procedures common to all universities. Board of Regents policies [21.06](#), [21.07](#), and [21.11](#) and campus specific policies and procedures should also be consulted in connection with this topic.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. For purposes of academic personnel administration, there are three distinct groups of faculty Appointment: tenured faculty Appointment, tenure-track faculty Appointment, and non-tenure-track faculty Appointment. Academic policies and procedures may vary depending on the specific faculty group. Consistent with Board policies [21.06](#), [21.07](#), and [21.11](#) and this policy and subject to final approval of the Chancellor, each respective university shall determine its specific criteria and procedures for the academic Appointment, Promotion, Tenure, and/or continued employment of eligible faculty through appropriate shared governance procedures. Specific criteria for each university shall reflect the mission, tradition, and complexity of the individual university.
- 2.2. The following provisions must be a part of each respective university's Promotion and Tenure policies and procedures:
 - 2.2.1. The process by which tenured and tenure-track faculty members are appointed and evaluated for Promotion and/or Tenure, consistent with Board policy [21.06](#) and Sections 4 and 5 of this policy;

- 2.2.2. The process by which eligible non-tenure-track faculty are appointed and evaluated for Promotion and/or award of an extended employment agreement, consistent with Section 6 of this policy;
 - 2.2.3. Peer review in at least one level of evaluation in their Promotion and Tenure procedures for both tenured and tenure-track faculty, and in Promotion and/or award of extended employment agreement procedures for eligible non-tenure-track faculty.
 - 2.2.4. The process governing an open, fair, and transparent annual performance review process that incorporates academic due process rights and provides for a short-term development plan with performance benchmarks for any faculty receiving a rating of not meeting expectations in any areas of any evaluation conducted. (See also Board of Regents Policy [21.11.](#))
 - 2.2.5. The recommendation of the appropriate Dean or equivalent mid-level administrator.
 - 2.2.6. A Promotion and Tenure grievance mechanism and process for tenured and tenure-track faculty to dispute Promotion and/or Tenure decisions; and for promotion-eligible non-tenure-track-faculty to dispute Promotion and/or extended employment agreement decisions in accordance with each respective university's applicable policies and procedures.
 - 2.3. Appointment letters and reappointment agreements must be approved by Academic Affairs (AA) and/or Human Resources (HR), and must follow standard forms as adopted by AA and HR at the respective universities.
 - 2.4. No person shall be appointed to the position of Dean, or equivalent, or Vice President, or equivalent, without prior consultation with the Chancellor and in accordance with [Board of Regents Policy 57.10.](#) No administrator may be given faculty status or Tenure without a review and positive recommendation from the academic unit involved.
 - 2.5. No faculty member shall be appointed, tenured or promoted at any university without a complete review consistent with the criteria and procedures of that university.
 - 2.6. Nothing in these policies and procedures shall in any way impair the fundamental policy of equal employment opportunity of the University of Houston System.
3. DEFINITIONS
- 3.1. Appointment: The employment of an individual in a given capacity for a specified time period at a stated salary.

- 3.2. Dismissal: Severance from employment due to adequate cause, financial exigency, medical reasons, constructive resignation, or the discontinuance of academic programs. (See [Board of Regents Policy 21.07.](#))
- 3.3. Promotion: The advancement to a higher rank or title based on merit or evidence of excellence in the performance of job duties and responsibilities.
- 3.4. Tenure: The entitlement of a faculty member to continue in the faculty member's academic position unless dismissed in accordance with Board policy [21.07](#). Tenure does not create a property interest in any attributes of a faculty position beyond a faculty member's continuing employment, which includes regular annual salary (e.g., 9, 10, or 11 months) and any privileges incident to being a tenured professor (depending on the discipline).

4. TENURED FACULTY

4.1. Appointment

- 4.1.1. The titles/ranks at which faculty may be tenured are associate professor and professor. Associate professors may be appointed with Tenure, or alternatively shall serve a probationary period not to exceed four years before Tenure is awarded. In cases of exceptional merit, the probationary period specified in the Appointment letter may be shortened by the President or designee at the request of the Dean or appropriate Division Head. Full professors are usually appointed with Tenure but may be required to serve a probationary period which shall be stated in the Appointment letter.
- 4.1.2. Tenure is awarded by the Board of Regents and upon the recommendation of the President of the respective university after the appropriate university review processes have been followed. Prior approval of the Chief Academic Officer (Provost), the President, Chancellor, and the Board of Regents is required before any faculty Appointment with Tenure can be made. Tenure is awarded on the basis of excellence in research and scholarship, teaching and instruction, and service to date, consistent with the mission of the university, and a high degree of confidence in the continuation and enhancement of this performance for the benefit of the university.
- 4.1.3. Recommendations for Tenure shall be transmitted annually by April 1, along with all supporting documentation, from the university Presidents to the Chancellor to be effective at the beginning of the succeeding academic year except for those faculty joining the university with Tenure. For faculty joining the university with Tenure, Tenure is contingent on the university's expedited Tenure review that includes an expedited scholarly review consistent with national standards and will be presented at the next regularly

scheduled board meeting for approval. Tenure shall be specific to the University of Houston System university recommending Tenure and never applies to administrative Appointments.

4.2. Promotion. Recommendations for Promotion of tenured faculty shall be transmitted annually by April 1, along with all supporting documentation, from the university Presidents to the Chancellor and are subject to the approval of the Chancellor and Board of Regents upon recommendation of the President.

4.3. Dismissal

4.3.1. Tenure can only be revoked due to Dismissal for cause, financial exigency, medical reasons, constructive resignation, discontinuance of academic programs, retirement, or resignation. Tenured faculty members shall be afforded every opportunity to be placed in other related faculty assignments when the existence of a financial exigency or the elimination of an academic program may necessitate the Dismissal of tenured faculty members.

4.3.2. When Dismissal involves a tenured faculty member, consultation with the Chancellor and System General Counsel shall be made prior to any official action. Regular Dismissal of a tenured faculty member requires approval by the Board of Regents and the Chancellor upon recommendation of the President after full and appropriate due process. The authority to summarily dismiss a tenured faculty member rests with the Provost of the respective university. ([See Board of Regents Policy 21.07.](#))

5. TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

5.1. Appointment. The titles/ranks which comprise the tenure-track faculty group are instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. The rank of instructor at a University of Houston System university shall normally be in the tenure-track for that university with time spent as an instructor counted in the probationary period. No instructor, however, may be awarded Tenure. Under special circumstances, the President may waive the inclusion of an instructor in the tenure-track by written mutual agreement.

5.2. Probationary period. The probationary period for tenure-track faculty is the time the faculty member spends under Appointment in a tenure-track position prior to being awarded Tenure.

5.2.1. Normally, the period of time of a leave of absence without pay shall not be counted as time in the tenure-track or Promotion sequence except in those circumstances approved by the President or their designee.

5.2.2. For tenure-track faculty, the probationary period shall not exceed seven years at the assistant professor rank, and the conditions of the period shall

be specified in the Appointment letter. Up to three years of prior full-time collegiate level teaching at the rank of assistant professor or above may be credited to the probationary period. Associate professors and professors without Tenure shall normally serve a probationary period not to exceed four years, and conditions of the probationary period shall be specified in the Appointment letter.

- 5.3. Promotion. Recommendations for Promotion of tenure-track faculty shall be transmitted annually by April 1, along with all supporting documentation, from the university Presidents to the Chancellor and are subject to the approval of the Chancellor and Board of Regents upon recommendation of the President. Promotion to associate professor is concurrent with the award of Tenure unless otherwise stipulated by the President due to special circumstances. Promotion from associate to full professor requires strong evidence of research and scholarship, teaching, and service as appropriate to the mission of the university. No specified time in rank is required for Promotion from associate to full professor.
- 5.4. Non-reappointment. Non-reappointment of a tenure-track faculty member refers to a situation in which a non-tenured, tenure-track faculty member is not offered reappointment at the end of a stated employment period. Notification of tenure-track faculty if they will not be reappointed at the end of a stated employment period must conform to the following schedule of dates:
 - 5.4.1. Not later than March 1 of the first academic year of service if the Appointment expires at the end of year one and the Appointment term is nine months in duration; or if a one-year Appointment terminates during the first academic year, at least three months in advance of termination if the Appointment term is more than nine months in duration.
 - 5.4.2. Not later than December 15 of the second academic year of service if the Appointment expires at the end of the second academic year and the Appointment term is nine months in duration; or, if an Appointment terminates during the second academic year of service, at least six months in advance of its termination when the Appointment term is more than nine months in duration.
 - 5.4.3. Not later than May 31 of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the Appointment is to expire, when the faculty member is in the third or later year of Appointment.

While the foregoing provisions delineate the minimum notification requirements for non-reappointment of tenure-track faculty, this in no way alters the probationary status of the tenure-track faculty member, or the year-to-year academic Appointment term of the tenure-track faculty member while in probationary status.

- 5.5. Dismissal. For Dismissal of tenure-track faculty, each respective university's policies and procedures govern, including those set out in the Faculty Handbook and/or published elsewhere by the respective university, such as those approved by the Office of Academic Affairs and Provost. Recommendations for regular and summary Dismissal of tenure-track faculty are reviewed and approved by the Provost of the respective university. ([See Board of Regents Policy 21.07.](#))

6. NON-TENURE-TRACK-FACULTY

6.1. Appointment

- 6.1.1. The titles/ranks which comprise the non-tenure-track faculty group shall be established by each respective university's non-tenure-track faculty policy and/or procedures.
- 6.1.2. A university may choose to utilize other faculty titles to convey certain meanings specific to that university. Depending on conventions observed by each respective university's non-tenure-track faculty policy and procedures, these designations may include instructional, clinical, and research faculty titles among others. Use of these terms constitutes non-tenure-track faculty status. For comprehensive guidance, refer to each respective university's faculty policy and procedures governing non-tenure-track faculty Appointment.
- 6.2. Probationary period. The probationary period for eligible non-tenure-track faculty is the period of time spent under Appointment prior to Promotion in rank and/or award of an extended employment agreement as described by the respective university's policy and procedures governing non-tenure-track faculty.
- 6.3. Promotion. Promotion and award of extended employment agreements for non-tenure track faculty who are Promotion-eligible as defined by the university's applicable policy and procedures are subject to approval by the Office of the Provost of the respective university. For guidance as to the responsibilities, expectations, and rights of non-tenure-track faculty as they are related to Promotion in rank and/or award of extended employment agreements, including any impact of leaves of absence without pay, refer to each respective university's applicable faculty policy and procedures. Recommendations for Promotion of non-tenure-track faculty shall be made once each year to be effective at the beginning of the succeeding academic year.
- 6.4. Non-reappointment. Non-reappointment of non-tenure-track faculty refers to a situation in which a non-tenure-track faculty member is not offered the next successive Appointment at the end of a stated employment period. For further guidance on non-reappointment notification of non-tenure-track faculty, refer to each respective university's non-tenure-track faculty policy and procedures.

