
Guidelines on Academic Professional Track Faculty

Fulfilling the research and teaching mission of the College of Geosciences requires diverse academic and professional contributions from the faculty. Tenured and tenure-track faculty are “expected to make significant contributions in the areas of scholarly research or creative work, teaching, and service” simultaneously. Increasingly, it is more and more difficult for tenured and tenure-track faculty to carry out these duties and meet growing institutional demands to teach more students and classes and expand research programs. To meet institutional demands in teaching and research the College of Geosciences hire Academic Professional Track (APT) faculty who have a singular focus in teaching or research.

Through their significant contribution to teaching and research, APT faculty are valuable members of their department and their profession. APT faculty can have regional, national and/or international reputations as excellent teachers (as Lecturers and Instructional Faculty) or scientists (as Research Faculty) based on their specialized knowledge and commitment to teaching, and contributions to the science, respectively. Because their roles do not align with the expectations typically prescribed for tenure track faculty (e.g., conducting highly specialized research in formal disciplines, undergraduate and graduate teaching and advising) or because they lacked the terminal degree, the Academic Professional Track (APT) was developed by the Dean of Faculties for non-tenure track faculty (http://dof.tamu.edu/sites/default/files/hiring/Guideline_Faculty_Titles.pdf).

This document sets out guidelines for the recruitment and retention of APT faculty, while providing those faculty with stable long-term employment. The guidelines are consistent with policies in other colleges at Texas A&M University and affirm the recommendations of the AAUP *Report on the Status of Non-Tenure Faculty* (<http://www.aaup.org/report/status-non-tenure-track-faculty>). In this respect, these guidelines strengthen departmental efforts to recruit highly qualified professional faculty who desire job stability and the opportunity for professional advancement by providing fixed term, multi-year appointments. Faculty holding long-term contracts also provides stability for long term planning within departments and programs. This document does not pertain to Visiting Assistant Professors or Scientists, or Research Scientists.

I. **Professional Track Faculty Ranks, Duties and Responsibilities**

- **Lecturer** or **Senior Lecturer** will normally hold a master’s or terminal degree in the teaching field, and are primarily engaged in instruction with the exception of service and administrative activities in support of their instructional duties and/or recruitment and community engagement.
 - The standard teaching load per semester for a full-time Lecturer or Senior Lecturer is determined by the Department Head of their home department. The teaching load should be greater than the standard load for tenured or tenure track faculty but should not exceed 12 semester credit hours (normally 3-4 courses) per semester.
 - Only regular course offerings (major or general academic) will count for the purpose of calculating teaching loads for faculty on this track
 - Large enrollment classes cannot be given extra weighting to bring the credit hours to 12.
 - Course loads in excess of this limit require the approval of the Dean of Geosciences.
 - Supervision of undergraduate directed studies (285, 485) and research (291, 491) is encouraged but will be considered as additions to the regular assigned load unless otherwise determined by the Department Head.

- Lecturers and Senior Lecturers cannot be assigned to graduate courses and are not eligible to be admitted to the graduate faculty to serve as Chair or Co-chair, or general voting members of M.S and Ph.D. committees.
- **Instructional Assistant Professor, Instructional Associate Professor or Instructional Professor** normally hold a PhD in the teaching field and will be engaged in instruction, and service and administrative activities that support the development and enhancement of pedagogical activities, and recruitment and community engagement.
 - The standard teaching load for full-time instructional faculty is 9 semester credit hours per semester (normally 3 courses).
 - Only regular course offerings (major or general academic) will count for the purpose of calculating teaching loads for faculty on this track
 - Large enrollment classes cannot be given extra weighting to bring the credit hours to 12.
 - Course loads in excess of this limit require the approval of the Dean of Geosciences.
 - Supervision of undergraduate directed studies (285, 485) and research (291, 491) is encouraged but will be considered as additions to the regular assigned load unless otherwise determined by the Department Head.
 - Assignment of an instructional faculty member to teach a specific graduate course requires the approval of the Dean of Geosciences. This authorization remains in effect for subsequent semesters.
 - Instructional faculty members are not expected to engage in research, but maintaining a limited research program involving undergraduate and graduate students is encouraged and may be taken into account in annual performance evaluations or for promotion
 - Faculty in this status are typically eligible to be admitted to the graduate faculty to serve as Chair or Co-Chair, or general voting members of M.S. and Ph.D. committees
- **Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor or Research Professor** are primarily engaged in externally funded research but expected to contribute to varying degrees to the instruction undergraduate and graduate students, and engage in service and administrative activities that support the development and enhancement of research activities. This is not the same as a **Research Scientist** who is only engaged in research and is not expected to contribute to the instruction undergraduate and graduate students.
 - Research faculty may engage in some instructional activities with preference given to the supervision of undergraduate directed studies (285, 485) and research (291, 491) in addition to limited teaching of regular course offerings
 - Service is not required by research faculty although the Department Head can request that they engage in service that enhances research
 - Faculty in this status are typically eligible to be admitted to the graduate faculty to serve as Chair or Co-Chair, or general voting members of M.S. and Ph.D. committees
- **Assistant Professor of Practice, Associate Professor of Practice or Professor of Practice** are non-tenure track appointments for faculty members who have had or maintain a primary employment in a profession outside of academia.

- Professors of practice are expected to be successful and effective professionals in their field, with at least 10 years of professional practice. Professors of practice are also expected to be an effective teacher of the profession.
- The standard teaching load for professors of practice is 6 semester credit hours per semester (normally 2 course) consistent with their professional experience or specific expertise and are not expected to teach established core courses.
- Professors of Practice are not expected to maintain a research program
- Professors of practice are expected to maintain professional credentials.
- Service is not required by Professors of Practice, although the Department Head can request that they engage in service that enhances student professionalization
- Faculty in this status are typically eligible to be admitted to the graduate faculty to serve as Chair or Co-Chair, or general voting members of M.S. and Ph.D. committees, provided the degree held by the faculty member is sufficient to warrant the advising role.

APT faculty participate in some governance responsibilities at Texas A&M University. They have voting privileges in the Department, College, and on some University committees, except in matters of promotion, tenure, and post-tenure decisions of tenure track faculty, where stipulated by University guidelines.

II. Hiring

- **Research Faculty:** University guidelines for hiring research faculty are determined by the Dean of Faculties at: [http://dof.tamu.edu/sites/default/files/hiring/Research Professor Positions Guidelines.pdf](http://dof.tamu.edu/sites/default/files/hiring/Research_Professor_Positions_Guidelines.pdf)
- **Teaching Faculty:** It is expected that departments complete a formal search to appoint instructional faculty, although an instructional faculty member may be hired without a search if the Dean of Geosciences grants a search waiver in emergency situations or in situations such as partner placement hires.
- **Professors of Practice:** May be hired without a search if the Dean of Geosciences grants a search waiver based on instructional need or an opportunity to enhance the undergraduate and/or graduate curriculum.

III. Appointments

- All letters of appointment must contain a clear description of the specific professional responsibilities required both inside and outside the classroom. The specific professional responsibilities must be appropriate to the faculty title, as outlined in section I.
- Faculty appointed to any title in the academic professional track must have credentials appropriate to the title and consistent with SACS COC rules for accreditation ([http://dof.tamu.edu/sites/default/files/hiring/Guidelines to Faculty Titles \(Modified 5-6-13\).pdf](http://dof.tamu.edu/sites/default/files/hiring/Guidelines_to_Faculty_Titles_(Modified_5-6-13).pdf)).
- SACS COC guidelines (http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/faculty_credentials.pdf) require that faculty undergraduate courses hold a doctorate or master's degree in the teaching discipline or master's degree with a concentration (ie. 18 graduate semester hours) in the teaching discipline. Faculty teaching graduate courses must hold an earned doctorate in the teaching discipline or closely related discipline.
- The letter of appointment must specify the criteria by which performance is to be annually evaluated, making expectations explicit.

- Initial appointment to a rank above Lecturer, Instructional Assistant Professor or Research Assistant Professor will require a departmental report and vote that will be reviewed by the Dean of Geosciences.
- **Instructional and Research Faculty** can be hired on rolling appointments of 1-year, 3-year or 5-years depending on the rank of the faculty member. Appointments should extend beyond a single year if instructional demand is predictable and when budgets permit.
 - System policy does not permit multi-year contracts that exceed five years, and it is recommended that an appointment of no more than three years is given to Instructional Assistant Professors.
 - Each year of satisfactory performance would renew the 1-year, 3-year or 5-year appointment at the recommendation of the Department Head.
 - The appointment is not renewed with an unsatisfactory annual performance. The appointment can be renewed with either 1 or 2 years of satisfactory performance at the discretion of the Department Head.
 - A faculty member becomes ineligible for a multi-year rolling appointment given 2 unsatisfactory annual reviews in a 5-year period.
 - The rolling appointment can be stopped with a non-renewal letter at any time at the recommendation of the Department Head or the College of Geosciences Promotion and Tenure Committee.
 - Research and instructional faculty can be dismissed by the Dean of Geosciences similar to the grounds for the revocation of tenure
- Salary should be reviewed when the appointment is renewed in light of any merit raises that may be in effect for tenured and tenure-track faculty.
- Faculty who are not being reappointed should be given timely notice in accordance with university policy.

IV. Annual Review

All faculty in academic professional titles should receive an annual evaluation in accordance with University Rule 12.01.99.M2.

- The annual evaluation should be guided by the professional responsibilities specified in the letter of appointment or annual renewal letter, and any specific expectations or criteria for evaluation described there.
- **Instructional Faculty and Professors of Practice**
 - Evaluated on the quality of their teaching and any initiatives to improve the quality of their instruction and the experience of the students including: 1) the development of innovative course materials, 2) new teaching approaches and techniques, 3) incorporation of instructional technology, 4) scholarship and research that informs teaching in the geosciences. As needed based on responsibilities given by the Department Head or based on rank, instructional faculty should also be evaluated based on their service contributions.
- **Research Faculty**
 - Evaluated based on research, extramural funding and scholarly endeavors and should be held to departmental standards for tenured and tenure-track faculty. Any teaching or service contributions during the review period should also be considered for Research faculty.

V. Criteria For Promotion

- Departments set promotion criteria that should be specified in departmental bylaws. Research expectations cannot be imposed on Instructional Faculty, nor can instruction

and service be expected for Research Faculty unless specifically described in the appointment or re-appointment letter. All promotions require an external reviewer from another department or college at Texas A&M University, unless a review letter can be acquired from a reviewer outside Texas A&M University who is knowledgeable of the candidates contributions to teaching. Minimum criteria for promotion of Instructional Faculty are:

- **Lecturer to Senior Lecturer**
 - Service of at least 5 years in the department or college or fewer years with exceptional performance
 - Demonstrated meritorious teaching as indicated by: 1) teaching performance, 2) effective teaching, 3) student satisfaction and outcomes, 4) new course development or major revision of an existing course, 4) high impact learning experiences for students, 5) competitive funding for teaching, 6) commitment to the professional development of students, 7) awards for teaching excellence.
 - Demonstrated meritorious service in support of instruction and/or student recruitment and community engagement.
- **Instructional Assistant Professor to Instructional Associate Professor**
 - Service of at least 5 years in the department or college or fewer years with exceptional performance.
 - Demonstrated meritorious teaching as indicated by: 1) teaching performance, 2) effective teaching, 3) student satisfaction and outcomes, 4) new course development or major revision of an existing course, 5) high impact learning experiences for students, 6) competitive funding for teaching, 7) commitment to the professional development of students, and 7) awards for teaching excellence.
 - Demonstrated meritorious service to the department, college or university as indicated by some combination of: 1) active service on department, college and university committees and task forces, 2) advisor to student organizations, 3) faculty governance, 4) administrative roles in the department, and 5) student recruitment and community engagement.
- **Instructional Associate Professor to Instructional Professor**
 - Service of at least 5 years in the department or college or fewer years with exceptional performance.
 - Demonstrated excellence in teaching as indicated by: 1) teaching performance, 2) effective teaching, 3) student satisfaction and outcomes, 4) new course development or major revision of an existing course, 4) high impact learning experiences for students, 5) competitive funding for teaching, 6) commitment to the professional development of students, and 7) awards for teaching excellence.
 - Demonstrated excellence in service to the department, college or university as indicated by some combination of: 1) chairing of department, college and university committees and task forces, 2) sustained activity as advisor to student organizations, 3) officer in faculty senate, 4) administrative roles in the department, 5) student recruitment and community engagement, 6) program chair or other major leadership position at a national or international meeting focusing on teaching.
- **Assistant Professor or Practice to Associate Professor of Practice**
 - Service of at least 5 years in the department or college or fewer years with exceptional performance while maintaining primary employment in a profession outside of academia.
 - Demonstrated meritorious teaching of the profession as indicated by: 1) teaching performance, 2) effective teaching, 3) student satisfaction and outcomes, 4) new

course development or major revision of an existing course, 4) high impact learning experiences for students, 5) competitive funding for teaching, 6) commitment to the professional development of students, and 7) awards for teaching excellence.

- **Assistant Professor or Practice to Associate Professor of Practice**

- Service of at least 5 years in the department or college or fewer years with exceptional performance while maintaining primary employment in a profession outside of academia.
- Demonstrated excellence in teaching of the profession as indicated by: 1) teaching performance, 2) effective teaching, 3) student satisfaction and outcomes, 4) new course development or major revision of an existing course, 4) high impact learning experiences for students, 5) competitive funding for teaching, 6) commitment to the professional development of students, and 7) awards for teaching excellence.

- **Research Faculty**

- Promotion criteria must conform to the following University guideline: [http://dof.tamu.edu/sites/default/files/hiring/Research Professor Positions Guidelines.pdf](http://dof.tamu.edu/sites/default/files/hiring/Research_Professor_Positions_Guidelines.pdf) and be consistent with the research portion of college and departmental promotion guidelines for tenured and tenure-track faculty.