

Appointment, Review and Promotion of Professional-Track Faculty

College of Engineering and Computing

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I. Introduction

This document details criteria and procedures for academic units in the College of Engineering and Computing to appoint, review and promote professional-track faculty. Professional-track faculty are important to the College of Engineering and Computing as we strive to attain and maintain the national and international prominence of a flagship university. This document is intended to assist professional-track faculty in their professional development, and to guide academic units in the assessment of their contributions and professional progress. Occasionally, the duties of a professional track faculty member may differ from the normal expectations outlined in this document. In such cases, criteria for appointment, review and promotion will be outlined in the job description.

A. University Policies

University policies and procedures for the appointment and promotion of professional-track faculty are set forth in The Faculty Manual of the University of South Carolina as well as in the University Policies and Procedures Manual, ACAF 1.16 (Professional-track Faculty), ACAF 1.00 (Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty), and ACAF 1.06 (Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions). This document details the specific criteria and procedures for academic units of the College of Engineering and Computing to implement University guidelines. When conflicts exist, the latest edition of The Faculty Manual and University Policies and Procedures will take precedence.

B. Hiring Authority and Review Cycle

All appointments to professional-track faculty positions must follow the guidelines in policy ACAF 1.00 Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-track and Professional-track Faculty. These include appointment and hiring, contract length, and review and promotion procedures. Searches for professional-track faculty members are conducted in accordance with ACAF 1.00 Appointment and Recruitment of Tenured, Tenure-Track and Professional-Track Faculty. The dean is the hiring authority, yet may delegate this responsibility or specific aspects of this responsibility in writing. Professional-track faculty are annually reviewed and may be considered for promotion on a calendar defined by the academic unit and provided to the faculty.

C. Contract Length

Per ACAF 1.16, the minimum contract length for professional-track faculty is one year for the initial hire and the first renewal. The minimum contract length is three years after three consecutive years of appointment. A three-year rolling contract is allowed. Contract lengths longer than the minimum, but not exceeding five years, may be approved by the hiring authority. For professional-track faculty with temporary, time-limited, or research-grant appointments, a minimum contract length is not required. In

all cases, renewal for each subsequent year is contingent upon satisfactory performance and the availability of funds.

II. Definitions

A. Professional Track Faculty

Per ACAF 1.16, Professional Track Faculty is a designation for faculty members who are engaged in research, instruction both inside and outside the classroom, service and/or administration but who are not eligible for tenure.

B. Teaching

Teaching includes such activities such as regularly scheduled classes as face-to-face, online or in other flexible delivery modes. It also includes the supervision of independent studies, student research, internships, direction and participation on undergraduate and graduate thesis or dissertation committees, creation of instructional materials, significant restructuring of existing courses, and the design of new courses. Any review of teaching of regularly scheduled classes must incorporate student evaluations and peer evaluations.

C. Research and Scholarship

Research may be original basic, applied, or a combination thereof. Professional-track faculty research activities include obtaining the funding as PI or Co-PI necessary to maintain one or more research programs. Research evidence includes lists and amounts of funded research grants and contracts, and proposals submitted for external funding. Substantive scholarship consists of work recognized as being of lasting value by peers. Evidence of substantive scholarship is provided primarily by journal articles and other refereed publications. It also includes presentations at national technical meetings, outside lectures, and research monographs and textbooks. Taken as a whole, a successful research program indicates creative thought and substantive contributions to one or more research areas in the unit.

D. Service

Service to the unit, college, and/or university should be completed in a diligent and ongoing manner. This includes participation on committees. Service may also include advisement and mentoring of students and student organizations, as well as student retention, recruitment, and outreach. Service that contributes to the reputation of the professional track faculty member and the university, such as involvement in one's professional discipline or regional, national, and international professional organizations may also be considered.

E. Standards

Standards of performance are relative to the performance of other tenure and professional-track faculty in the academic unit. The following adjectival standards are used to rate performance in the categories of teaching, research, and service, as applicable to an individual's appointment.

- **Outstanding:** The candidate's performance is far above the minimally effective level. In regard to research and scholarship, output is of very high quality, and a national or international reputation is evident. Regarding teaching, the candidate is rated among the best in the unit

through student and peer evaluations and makes substantive other contributions to the teaching mission.

- **Excellent:** The candidate significantly exceeds the minimally effective level of performance. In regard to research and scholarship, output is already of high quality, and a national or international reputation is clearly possible, if not likely. Regarding teaching, the candidate is rated at or above average in the unit through student and peer evaluations.
- **Good:** The candidate's performance is clearly above the minimally effective level. In regards either to research and scholarship or to teaching, the individual shows promise of high quality in the future.
- **Fair:** The candidate meets the minimally effective level of performance.
- **Unacceptable:** The candidate has accomplished less than the minimally effective level of performance.

F. Academic Units

For this policy, academic units in the College of Engineering are comprised of the college and its departments, interdisciplinary programs, centers and institutes approved according to ACAF 2.02 Establishment and Modification of Academic Administrative Units. A unit head is the associated chair, director, or associate dean. A unit committee is the body of faculty associated with the unit that is designated to review faculty performance and vote on faculty promotions. Faculty eligible for unit committee membership are defined later in this document.

III. Procedures

A. Candidate Files

The professional-track faculty member bears responsibility for the preparation of the reappointment and promotion files presented to the unit. A reappointment and/or promotion file must include sufficient evidence of the candidate's quality and quantity of work with respect to the applicable criteria to enable the unit to evaluate the candidate's strengths and/or weaknesses. See Appendix A: CEC Guidelines for Review and Promotion Files for Professional Track Faculty.

B. Annual Review

Annually, each professional-track faculty member will receive a written review that provides specific evaluative information and an administrative assessment of the individual's performance. For this review, the faculty member will submit an annual review file that demonstrates accomplishments aligned with the criteria for reappointment and promotion. The faculty member's direct supervisor or the unit head will perform the annual review of the individual's annual performance. The unit head will communicate the results of the annual performance review to the individual in writing and by meeting. The review should be sufficiently detailed to aid the individual in professional growth and development.

C. Promotion

A professional-track faculty member seeking promotion must apply for promotion. Calls for promotion materials and review of these materials should be according to the calendar set by the academic unit and consistent with section I of this document. The individual will submit a promotion file that demonstrates cumulative accomplishments aligned with the applicable criteria for promotion.

Promotion of a professional-track faculty member can be recommended if the faculty member has (a) completed the time in rank specified in the promotion criteria, if applicable, and (b) has met the criteria for promotion. The promotion process includes approval of the appropriate unit committee, recommendation of the unit head, recommendation by the dean, and the approval by the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost.

D. Non-Reappointment and Termination for Professional-track Faculty in FTE Positions:

Appointments of professional-track faculty shall be in writing and shall specify the beginning and ending date of appointment. Appointments shall terminate on the date specified. Notice of intent to reappoint or not reappoint shall be given in writing to the faculty member at least two months prior to the specified ending date of the current appointment. 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. Termination of employment before the end of the contract period can be for lack of satisfactory performance, just cause and/or insufficient funds. In such cases, a two-month written notice of non-reappointment is recommended but is not required.

E. Unit Committees

Each unit in the College of Engineering and Computing will designate a unit committee of at least three faculty to review and vote on the appointment and promotion of professional-track faculty. If there are fewer than three faculty in the unit at rank levels described below, the unit committee will be completed with faculty from other units. The chair of the unit committee will be elected by the unit faculty. Faculty in the unit who hold administrative positions that enable them to make recommendations on a candidate for promotion (unit head, dean, provost, or president) may not vote at the unit level.

- **Unit Committee for Research Assistant Professors:** Unit faculty at any rank of Research Associate Professor, Research Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor shall comprise the unit committee for Research Assistant Professors.
- **Unit Committee for Research Associate Professors:** Unit faculty at any rank of Research Professor or Professor shall comprise the unit committee for Research Associate Professors
- **Unit Committee for Instructors and Lecturers:** Unit faculty at any rank of Senior Instructor, Senior Lecturer, Distinguished Instructor, Distinguished Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor shall comprise the unit committee for Instructors and Lecturers.
- **Unit Committee for Senior Instructors and Senior Lecturers:** Unit faculty at the ranks of Distinguished Instructor, Distinguished Lecturer, or Professor shall comprise the unit committee for Senior Instructors and Senior Lecturers.
- **Unit Committee for Professors of Practice:** Unit faculty at any rank of Research Professor, Distinguished Instructor, Distinguished Lecturer or Professor of Practice shall comprise the unit committee for Professors of Practice.

Prior to the vote, unit committee members will discuss a candidate's file. An individual or subcommittee may be designated to review and present the candidate's information. Eligible unit committee voters must vote "yes" or "no" on appointment and on promotion decisions by secret ballot. Faculty may choose not to participate, in which case they are excluded from the count of faculty eligible to vote. Faculty in the unit who hold an appointment as unit head/director, dean, provost, or president may not

vote at the unit level and are also excluded from the count of eligible voters. At least two-thirds of the “yes” and “no” votes must be “yes” for the candidate to receive a vote of approval from the unit.

IV. Criteria for Research-track Faculty

Research-track faculty are 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-track faculty members must hold an earned doctorate in the major discipline of the unit, or in a discipline that allows them to support and enhance the research and scholarly mission of the unit. Research-track faculty are appointed using the titles of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor.

- **Research Assistant Professor:** An individual appointed as a Research Assistant Professor is normally expected to have post-doctoral research experience that supports or enhances research in the unit.
- **Research Associate Professor:** An individual appointed or promoted as a Research Associate Professor normally has five or more years of full-time research experience as a Research Assistant Professor or equivalent.
- **Research Professor:** This rank is reserved for individuals with proven stature in research. Promotion to Research Professor is not normally considered until after an individual has at least nine years of effective, relevant research experience.

A. Initial Appointment

Candidates for initial appointment at the rank of Research Assistant Professor must demonstrate professional development, grant writing ability, and a record of scholarly production beyond that typically expected of a doctoral-degree recipient. The candidate for Research Assistant Professor must demonstrate the potential for contributions to research, including the ability to attract research funding. Candidates with extensive scholarly publications, grant funding, and/or industrial experience may be considered for initial appointment at the rank of Research Associate Professor or Research Professor.

B. Reappointment

To be eligible for reappointment, a research-track faculty member must demonstrate contributions to the unit’s research program by a growing record of publications in reputable refereed journals and by significant contributions to proposals for external research funding. Reappointment requires levels of Good or better in research with indications of increasing productivity, and Fair or better in any other duties assigned.

C. Promotion to Research Associate Professor

A candidate for promotion to Research Associate Professor must have an established reputation beyond the university in the research field. This reputation must be validated by a substantive record of publications in reputable refereed journals and by substantiated contributions to successful proposals for external funding that support one or more research programs in the unit. Promotion to Research Associate Professor requires levels of Excellent or better in research and Good or better in any other duties assigned.

D. Promotion to Research Professor

For promotion to the rank of Research Professor, the candidate must be recognized internationally or nationally in the research field. The candidate must demonstrate continued, creative, and substantive

contributions to the development and maintenance of significant research programs within the unit. Evidence for these contributions may include a consistent and durable record of refereed publications and external research funding and/or acquisition and development of major new research facilities, including scholarly activities in areas that would not have developed solely from the knowledge base of other unit faculty. There should also be evidence of having attained national or international stature in the research field. Promotion to Research Professor requires levels of Outstanding in research accompanied by Good or better in any other assigned duties.

V. Criteria for Instructional-track Faculty

The primary responsibility of an instructional-track faculty member is teaching; however, other duties may be included. Instructional-track faculty members must meet SACSCOC credential requirements for teaching at the appropriate level as outlined in University Policy ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructors of Record. Instructional-track faculty are appointed using the titles of Instructor, Lecturer, Senior Instructor, Senior Lecturer, Distinguished Instructor, and Distinguished Lecturer.

- **Instructor or Lecturer:** An individual appointed as Instructor or Lecturer must have teaching-related experience in the discipline.
- **Senior Instructor or Senior Lecturer:** An individual appointed or promoted as Senior Instructor or Senior Lecturer must have the equivalent of six years of full-time teaching experience in higher education.
- **Distinguished Instructor or Distinguished Lecturer:** This rank is reserved for individuals with a proven record of outstanding teaching.

A. Initial Appointment

Candidates for initial appointment at the rank of Instructor or Lecturer must demonstrate an ability to teach effectively in the discipline. Normally, teaching experience in higher education would be required. Candidates with extensive teaching experience and with evidence of good student and/or peer teaching evaluations may be considered for appointment at the rank of Senior Instructor, Senior Lecturer, Distinguished Instructor or Distinguished Lecturer.

B. Reappointment

To be eligible for reappointment, an instructional-track faculty member's student and peer teaching evaluations must be at the levels of Good or better, with promise of high quality in the future. The candidate must also be rated Fair or better in any other assigned duties.

C. Promotion to Senior Instructor or Senior Lecturer

Promotion to Senior Instructor or Senior Lecturer requires that the candidate be rated at or above average in the unit through student and peer evaluations. Evaluation levels of Excellent or better in teaching are required. The candidate must also be rated Good or better in any other assigned duties.

D. Promotion to Distinguished Instructor or Distinguished Lecturer

For promotion to these ranks, the candidate must be rated among the best in the unit according to student and peer evaluations, and also make substantive other contributions to the teaching mission. Evaluation levels must include Outstanding in teaching. Additional contributions to the unit will be evaluated as Good or better.

VI. Criteria for Professors of Practice

A. Initial Appointment

An individual appointed as Professor of Practice must have a proven reputation in professional achievement and expertise, experience, and international/national recognition in the professional field. Professors of Practice engaged in teaching must meet SACSCOC credential requirements for teaching at the appropriate level as outlined in University Policy ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructors of Record. Appointment as Professor of Practice must have prior approval, through academic channels, of the president.

B. Reappointment

To be eligible for reappointment, a Professor of Practice faculty member must be rated as Good or better in at least one category of teaching, research and scholarship, or service. The candidate must also be rated Fair or better in any other assigned duties.

C. Promotion

An eligible Professor of Practice may be promoted to another professional-track faculty rank as described in the sections of this document that govern instructional-track and research-track faculty positions.

VII. Criteria for Other Professional-track Faculty Titles

While additional professional-track faculty titles are defined in university policy, these are not generally utilized in the College of Engineering and Computing. If a faculty appointment is made using a title not covered by this document, the appointed faculty will receive annual review and be eligible for promotion as guided by university policy.

VIII. Adoption History

The policy was adopted by academic administrative units of the College of Engineering and Computing as listed below.

Unit: CEC

Date 1-24-2022