

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

SECTION: Academic Affairs

NUMBER: 06.A.09

AREA: General

SUBJECT: Academic Personnel Policies

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This administrative memorandum specifies policies and procedures governing various academic personnel actions utilized by the [University of Houston System](#) and its component universities. It delineates policies and procedures common to all component universities. Board of Regents policies [21.06](#) and [21.07](#) and campus specific policies and procedures should also be consulted in connection with this topic.

2. DEFINITIONS AND CONDITIONS

- 2.1. Appointment - Appointment is defined as the employment of an individual in a given capacity for a specified time period at a stated salary. Faculty appointments are made at the respective universities following procedures developed at each respective university and which have been approved by the Chancellor. 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. Prior approval of the Chief Academic Officer (Provost) is required before any faculty appointment with tenure can be made. In addition, 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.

For purposes of academic personnel administration, there are three distinct groups of faculty appointment. Academic policies and procedures may vary depending on the specific faculty group:

- a. Tenured (T) faculty appointment – The titles/ranks at which faculty may be tenured (T) are associate professor and professor.
- b. Tenure-track (TT) faculty appointment – The titles/ranks which comprise the tenure-track (TT) faculty group are instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor.

- c. Non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty appointment – The titles/ranks which comprise the non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty group shall be established by each respective university's non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty policy and/or procedures.
- 2.2 Faculty qualifications – To accomplish the educational mission and goals of the university, it is essential that each institution appoint competent and qualified faculty. For accreditation purposes, the university is guided by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS COC), our institutional regional accrediting body. Guidance regarding appropriate credentials for teaching are set out in the [SACS COC Faculty Credentials Guidelines](#).
- 2.3. Separation - Separation is defined as the process by which an individual terminates employment with the university. Three distinct modes of faculty separation are recognized: resignation, non-reappointment, and dismissal.
- a. Resignation is voluntary termination of employment by an employee, including a faculty member.
 - b. Non-reappointment of a tenure-track (TT) faculty member refers to a situation in which a non-tenured, tenure-track (TT) faculty member is not offered reappointment at the end of a stated employment period. Notification of tenure-track (TT) faculty if they will not be reappointed at the end of a stated employment period must conform to the following schedule of dates:
 - (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.
 - (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.
 - (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 (TT) faculty, this in no way alters the probationary status of the tenure-track (TT) faculty member, or the year-to-year academic appointment term of the tenure-track (TT) faculty member while in probationary status.

- c. Non-reappointment of non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty refers to a situation in which a non-tenure-track (NTT) 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 (NTT) faculty, refer to each respective institution's NTT faculty policy and procedures.
- d. Dismissal is severance from employment due to adequate cause, financial exigency, medical reasons, or the discontinuance of academic programs. Dismissal shall not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom. When dismissal involves a tenured (T) faculty member, consultation with the Chancellor and System General Counsel shall be made prior to any official action. Subject to final approval by the Board of Regents, the Chancellor has the authority to dismiss tenured (T) faculty upon recommendation of the President after full and appropriate due process. ([See Board of Regents Policy 21.07.](#))

For dismissal of tenure-track (TT) faculty or non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty, each respective institution's policies and procedures govern, including those set out in the Faculty Handbook and/or published elsewhere by the respective institution including those approved by the Office of Academic Affairs and Provost. Recommendations for dismissal of tenure-track (TT) faculty are reviewed and approved by the Provost of the respective institution. The authority to dismiss a non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty member prior to expiration of the specified term of appointment rests with the Provost of the respective institution.

In the case of non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty appointment, with the Office of the Provost's consent and endorsement of the respective college dean based upon college and/or departmental practices, offer letters and/or reappointment agreements may stipulate that the academic appointment may be terminated early with thirty days' notice to the faculty member for reasons constituting failure to satisfy essential job duties and responsibilities of the position, and/or any other objective job-related reason justifying early termination. Under these circumstances, written notice of termination must be issued thirty calendar days prior to the specified termination date. Termination must be supported by written justification which on its face establishes the faculty member's failure or inability to perform essential services/duties for which he/she was engaged, conduct resulting in impairment of student-learning outcomes or

objectives, or any other reasonable and objective basis for non-continuation of appointment. The decision to terminate must be predicated upon a record of timely communication(s) to the faculty member of his/her failure to perform the essential duties/responsibilities of their faculty appointment, including documentation of which area(s) the faculty member is under-performing in, and any appropriate action taken to address the under-performance including any opportunities or support provided to assist the faculty member in addressing the underperformance.

- 2.3. Tenure - Tenure is defined as the right to continuous employment. It is awarded by the Chancellor based upon the authority delegated 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. Tenure is awarded on the basis of research and scholarship, teaching and instruction, and service excellence 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. Recommendations for tenure shall be made once each year to be effective at the beginning of the succeeding academic year. Tenure can only be revoked due to dismissal for cause, financial exigency, elimination of programs, medical reasons, retirement, or resignation. Tenured (T) 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 a program may necessitate the dismissal of tenured (T) faculty members. Tenure shall be specific to the University of Houston System component recommending tenure and never applies to administrative appointments.
- 2.4. Promotion - Promotion is defined as advancement to a higher rank or title based on merit or evidence of excellence in the performance of job responsibilities. Promotions of tenured (T) and tenure-track (TT) faculty are subject to the approval of the Chancellor and Board of Regents upon recommendation of the President. Promotion of non-tenure track (NTT) faculty who are promotion-eligible as defined by the institution's applicable policy and procedures is subject to approval by the Office of the Provost of the respective institution. For guidance as to the responsibilities, expectations, and rights of non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty as they are related to promotion in rank, refer to each respective institution's applicable NTT faculty policy and procedures. Recommendations for promotion of NTT faculty shall be made once each year to be effective at the beginning of the succeeding academic year.
- 2.5. Tenured (T) and Tenure-track (TT) positions - The following faculty ranks are considered part of the tenure-track (TT) which may lead to the award of tenure: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. The titles/ranks at which faculty may be tenured (T) are associate professor and professor.
- 2.6. Non-tenure-track (NTT) positions - A university may choose to utilize other faculty titles to convey certain meanings specific to that university. Depending on

conventions observed by each respective institution's NTT 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 institution's NTT faculty policy and procedures governing non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty appointment.

- 2.7. Probationary period - The probationary period is defined as the time a faculty member spends under appointment in a tenure-track (TT) position prior to being awarded tenure, or in the case of eligible non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty, 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 institution's policy and procedures governing non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty.

For tenure-track (TT) 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.

- 2.8. Faculty leaves of absence - Faculty leaves of absence without pay are granted by the President or designee. Normally, the period of time of a leave of absence shall not be counted as time in the tenure-track (TT) or promotion sequence except in those circumstances approved by the President or designee. For guidance regarding leaves of absence for non-tenure-track faculty (NTT), refer to each respective institution's applicable policy and procedures.

3. TIME IN RANK

- 3.1. The rank of instructor at a University of Houston System university shall normally be in the tenure-track (TT) 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 (TT) by written mutual agreement.
- 3.2. Tenure-track (TT) assistant professors shall serve a probationary period not to exceed seven years, at least four of which must be at the specific University of Houston System university. Promotion to associate professor is concurrent with the award of tenure unless otherwise stipulated by the President due to special circumstances.
- 3.3. 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.

- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. Full professors are usually appointed with tenure but may be required to serve a probationary period which shall be stated in the appointment letter.
- 3.6. For guidance on time in rank requirements for non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty eligible for promotion in rank, refer to the respective university's NTT policy and procedures.
- 3.7. Recommendations for tenure of tenure-track (TT) faculty and promotion of tenured (T) or tenure-track (TT) faculty shall be transmitted annually by April 1, along with all supporting documentation, from the university Presidents to the Chancellor.
- 3.8. Recommendations for promotion and/or award of extended employment agreements for eligible non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty shall be managed as stipulated by the respective institution's NTT policy and procedures.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. Each respective university shall determine its specific criteria and procedures for tenure and/or promotion of tenured (T) and/or tenure-track (TT) faculty, and, promotion and/or award of an extended employment agreement to eligible non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty through appropriate shared governance procedures. Specific criteria for each university shall reflect the mission, tradition, and complexity of the individual university.
- 4.2. The following provisions must be a part of each respective institution's tenure and promotion policies and procedures: the process by which tenured (T) and tenure-track (TT) faculty members are appointed and evaluated for promotion and/or tenure; the process by which eligible non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty are appointed and evaluated for promotion and/or award of an extended employment agreement; and each university must include peer review in at least one level of evaluation in their tenure and promotion procedures for both tenured (T) and tenure-track (TT) faculty, and in promotion and/or award of extended employment agreement procedures for eligible non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty. It must also include the recommendation of the appropriate Dean or equivalent mid-level administrator. Each university must establish a promotion and tenure grievance mechanism and process for: tenured (T) and tenure-track (TT) 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 institution’s applicable policies and procedures.

- 4.3. Tenure and promotion criteria and procedures of each university for tenured (T) and/or tenure-track (TT) faculty are subject to final approval of the Chancellor; promotion and award of extended employment agreements for eligible non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty are subject to the approval of the Office of the Provost at each respective institution.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. Nothing in these policies and procedures shall in any way impair the fundamental policy of equal employment opportunity of the University of Houston System.

5. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

Review: Every three years on or before March 1

6. APPROVAL

Approved: Paula M. Short
Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

Renu Khator
Chancellor

Date: March 27, 2018

REVISION LOG

Revision Number	Approval Date	Description of Changes
1	06/16/1994	Initial version

Revision Number	Approval Date	Description of Changes
2	02/14/2012	<p>Applied revised SAM template and added new Revision Log. Corrected Board of Regents policy numbers throughout procedure. Revised Section 2.0 definitions for Appointment, Separation, Tenure, Non-Tenure Track Positions, and Faculty Leaves of Absence. For the definition of Appointment; added information on appointment letters and changed the responsibility for faculty appointment with tenure to the Chief Academic Officer (Provost). Removed special cases tenure requirement in Section 3.2. Revised Section 3.6 to emphasize teaching assignments as opposed to teaching budgets. Removed the specific procedures requirement for each university for tenure and promotion in Section 4.2 and added to Section 4.1. Removed Index terms (Section 7.0)</p>
3	03/27/2018	<p>Updated SAM Template per current operational requirements. Revised titles and links as applicable. Added groups of faculty appointments in Section 2.1. Added Section 2.2 on faculty qualifications and SACS COC Faculty Credentials Guidelines. Added Section 2.3.c on non-appointment of non-tenure-track faculty. Updated Section 2.3.d on the process of dismissal for both tenure-track faculty and non-tenure-track faculty, including terminations being supported by written justification on specific guidelines. Updated Section 2.4 on promotion process for non-tenure-track faculty. Added clarification to Section 2.6 on non-tenure-track positions. Revised Section 2.7 on probationary periods for non-tenure-track faculty, assistant professor rank not to exceed seven years, and associate professor and professors not to exceed four years. Added leave of absence information for promotion-eligible non-tenure-track faculty located in applicable policy and procedures in Section 2.8. Removed original content in Section 3.6, and added time in rank requirement information for non-tenure-track faculty eligible for promotion in rank. Revised information in Section 4.2 regarding the content of an institution's tenure and promotion guidelines, including evaluation, peer reviews, and promotion/tenure grievance mechanisms. Updated Section 4.3 on criteria being approved by the Chancellor, and promotion and award for continuing employment agreement for eligible non-tenure-track faculty are subject to approval of the Office of the Provost. Changed review period from even numbered years before March 1st to every three years on or before March 1st. Added Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost to approval cycle in Section 6</p>