

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM  
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM

**SECTION: Academic Affairs**

**NUMBER: 06.A.09**

**AREA: General**

**SUBJECT: Academic Personnel Policies**

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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 the university and which have been approved by the Chancellor. Appointment letters must be approved by Academic Affairs (AA) and Human Resources (HR), and must follow standard forms as adopted by AA and HR at 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.

2.2. Separation - Separation is defined as the process by which an individual terminates employment with the university. Three distinct modes of separation are recognized.

- a. Resignation is voluntary termination of employment by an employee.
- b. Non-reappointment refers to a situation in which a non-tenured faculty member is not offered the next successive employment appointment at the end of a stated employment period. Non-reappointment notification 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 that year; or if a one-year appointment terminates during an academic year, at least three months in advance of termination.
- (2) Not later than December 15 of the second academic year of service if the appointment expires at the end of that academic year; or, if an initial two-year appointment terminates during an academic year, at least six months in advance of its termination.
- (3) Not later than May 31 of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the appointment is to expire, when the individual is in the third or later year of appointment.

c. Dismissal is severance from employment due to either 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 faculty member, consultation with the Chancellor and University Legal 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 faculty upon recommendation of the President after full and appropriate due process. (See Board of Regents Policy [21.07](#).)

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 teaching, research, 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, the elimination of programs, medical reasons, 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 a program may necessitate the dismissal of tenured 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 an advancement to a higher rank or title based on merit or evidence of excellence in the performance of job responsibilities. Promotions are subject to the approval of the Chancellor and Board of Regents upon recommendation of the President. Recommendations for

promotion shall be made once each year to be effective at the beginning of the succeeding academic year.

- 2.5. Tenure-track positions - The following ranks are considered part of the tenure track: instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor.
- 2.6. Non-tenure track positions - A university may choose to utilize other faculty titles to convey certain meanings specific to that university. These include lecturer and prefixes attached to titles in Section 2.5 such as visiting and adjunct. The use of these terms implies non-tenure track status.
- 2.7. Probationary period - The probationary period is defined as the time a faculty member spends under appointment in a tenure-track position prior to being awarded tenure. It shall not exceed seven years, 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.
- 2.8. Faculty leaves of absence - Faculty leaves of absence without pay are granted by the President. Normally, the period of time of a leave of absence shall not be counted as time in the tenure track or promotion sequence except in those circumstances approved by the President or designee.

### 3. TIME IN RANK

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. 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 at the request of the Dean or appropriate Division Head.
- 3.4. Promotion from associate to full professor requires strong evidence of teaching, scholarship, 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. Full-time University of Houston System employees, such as professional and administrative staff, who have at least 50% teaching assignments as part of their full time positions shall accrue time toward tenure and promotion at the same rate as full-time faculty. Full-time employees not compensated who do not have at least 50% teaching assignments shall not accrue time toward tenure and promotion.
- 3.7. Recommendations for tenure and promotion shall be transmitted annually by April 1, along with all supporting documentation, from the university Presidents to the Chancellor.

**4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1. Each university shall determine its specific criteria and procedures for tenure and promotion through appropriate shared governance procedures. Criteria shall reflect the mission, tradition, and complexity of the university.
- 4.2. The following provisions must be a part of tenure and promotion procedures: The process by which faculty members are appointed or evaluated for tenure and promotion at each university must include peer review in at least one level of evaluation. 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 procedure.
- 4.3. Tenure and promotion criteria and procedures of each university are subject to final approval of the Chancellor.
- 4.4. No faculty member shall be appointed 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

Review: Even numbered years before March 1

6. APPROVAL

Approved: Renu Khator  
Chancellor

Date: February 14, 2012

**REVISION LOG**

<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Description of Changes</b>
1	06/16/1994	Initial version
2	02/14/2012	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)