

Guidelines for Establishing and Filling Positions in the Teaching Title Series

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Executive Summary

The teaching title series is a nontenure-track professional series for appointment of appropriately qualified individuals who contribute to the university's academic mission by participation in activities that (1) primarily involve teaching; (2) are of contractually specified duration; and (3) include one other component from service, outreach, research, or creative work.

Criteria for appointment, performance review, and promotion in the teaching title series are included herein. Appointment, review, and promotion in the teaching title series require demonstrated ability in high-quality teaching as a core component of the series. Employment as an associate teaching professor or teaching professor requires evidence of prior or current success as a teaching practitioner. Appointees in the teaching title series are not eligible for tenure or de facto tenure.

All teaching title series positions are initially made as one-year contracts that may be renewed annually, but not to exceed the period of funding from the anticipated income. Teaching associates and teaching professors may have contracts of three, five, or up to ten years in duration. All appointees in the teaching title series will have annual, written employment contracts.

Appointees in the teaching title series are considered to be educators and are under the supervision of the department head/chair or unit head. They are eligible for all the benefits except tenure, de facto tenure, and professional improvement leave. The department or unit must assure that space and facilities are available for conducting instructional work. Teaching title series positions are not to be considered a substitute for postdoctoral positions or a means to extend postdoctoral appointment beyond university time limits for postdoctoral appointments.

To establish a position in the teaching title series, the initiating unit shall (1) prepare a proposal demonstrating the need for such a position and indicate the source (including any commitment of Auburn University), amount, and term of income funding; (2) prepare a job description and identify any space that is needed for the performance of the assignment; and (3) obtain approvals of the proposal by the chief administrative officer of the concerned unit, the dean of the college, and the provost. The proposal shall be transmitted to the dean of the college by the department head/chair or unit head with their indication of faculty approval for establishment of the position. The hiring of teaching faculty will follow normal university

hiring procedures. Joint appointments require the approval of all deans involved.

Promotions in the teaching title series will be specified for each department, and criteria must be approved by the Provost's Office. Promotion decisions will be determined by the specific document, department head/chair, and the dean of the respective college. Promotion decisions must correspond to the annual deadlines approved by the Provost's Office and be reported to the Provost's Office accordingly.

Appointment and Promotion in the Teaching Title Series

A. Introduction: The first responsibility of Auburn University is to educate our students and prepare them for life. To meet the increasing demand for skilled individuals to support instruction, the university has established a non-tenure track teaching professor series. This series is designed to attract and retain professionals with demonstrated expertise in their fields, who will contribute to the university's academic mission by providing high-quality instruction. They will also demonstrate excellence in one other area of service, outreach, research, or creative work. A teaching title series for appointments and promotions without tenure is established as hereafter defined and described.

B. Definition: The teaching title series is a professional series for appointment and promotion of appropriately qualified individuals who participate in the University's mission by participation in projects that (1) primarily involve teaching; (2) are of contractually specified duration; and (3) include one other component from service, outreach, research, or creative work. A faculty member on appointment in the teaching title series is primarily expected to provide teaching services and teaching practice and to a lesser extent other scholarly endeavors as defined by department.

C. Establishment of a Position: To establish a position in the teaching title series, the initiating unit shall (1) prepare a proposal demonstrating the need for such a position and indicate the source, amount, and term of funding for the program of teaching practice, (2) prepare a job description and identify any space that is needed for the performance of teaching practice; and (3) obtain approvals of the proposal by the chief administrative officer of the concerned unit, the dean of the college, and the provost. The proposal shall be transmitted to dean of the college by the department head/chair or unit head with their indication of faculty approval for establishment of the position. The hiring of teaching faculty will follow normal university hiring procedures. Joint appointments require the approval of all deans involved.

Initial Appointment: Initial appointments are made as the result of normal recruitment procedures. Departments and units have some leeway in establishing the search procedures most appropriate for their particular circumstances. The department or unit might act as a committee of the whole, or smaller screening committees might be used; a

recommendation by a search committee might be transmitted to the department or unit as a whole for further consideration and transmittal to the department head/chair or unit head, or it might be transmitted directly to the department head/chair or unit head.

Whatever the procedure, it should be established in advance of need by the department or unit as a whole. The department head/chair or unit head, in consultation with their faculty, should decide on the positions needed and the qualifications a successful candidate must have. Together they should develop a position description to be supplied to the candidates.

The department head/chair or unit head and the search committee shall be guided by the Provost's Office and Affirmative Action Office in framing an advertisement for the position, in seeking permission to advertise, and in recommending an appointment. Guidelines from the Affirmative Action Office help ensure compliance with federal law and help ensure an open and fair search.

When making recommendations for appointments in the teaching title series, the department head/chair or unit head shall confer with all available members of the department holding professorial ranks or, if the unit does not include professorial faculty, with those faculty holding continuing appointments. They shall then transmit a written summary of the reactions of these faculty members along with appointment forms, through the appropriate dean and/or director, to the provost. Where the faculty members do not concur in an initial appointment, the head/chair may submit a recommendation for appointment with their justification and a report of nonconcurrence of the faculty. An appointment made without the support of the faculty may jeopardize the new hire, since the faculty will ultimately vote on promotion.

The doctorate is the terminal degree for most disciplines represented at Auburn University. Requests for exceptions must be presented to the provost with appropriate justification by the department head/chair, with faculty concurrence, and the dean. The appointment cannot be made without the approval in writing of the Provost's Office.

Each initial appointment must be confirmed by the appropriate department head/chair/unit head or dean in a written notice to the appointee after proper administrative approvals have been obtained. This notice should include determination of prior service at another institution to be credited toward the probationary period. This letter constitutes the faculty member's written terms of the initial employment.

D. Areas of Activity: Three areas of activity are important in the evaluation of individuals for appointment, performance review, and promotion in the teaching title series: (1) documented evidence of effective teaching practice; (2) demonstrated commitment and excellence in one other another area of either outreach, service, research, or creative; and (3) collegiality, as

discussed for tenure-track faculty in Section 3.6.2 of this *Faculty Handbook*. To point (3) any one component of outreach, service, research, or creative is acceptable. The absence of any one criterion is not sufficient for denying promotion.

Teaching faculty are expected to teach in the teaching setting. The letter of appointment between the teaching faculty and the university must specify the amount of teaching expected and an appropriate source of the funding to support such instructional activity.

E. Academic Ranks, Titles, and Criteria: The academic ranks and related titles in the teaching title series shall be: (1) assistant teaching professor, (2) associate teaching professor, and (3) teaching professor. Although it is not feasible to specify exact criteria for evaluating the credentials of an individual for appointment or promotion to any one particular rank in the teaching title series, the following statements are provided as guidelines.

1. Assistant Teaching Professor: Assistant teaching professor is the usual entry-level rank for a candidate who has completed the appropriate terminal professional degree or has the equivalent in training, ability, and experience and meets appropriate credentialing requirements. An appointee is not required to have a minimum number of years in teaching service to be eligible for the rank of assistant teaching professor.

Appointment to the rank of assistant teaching professor shall be made when it has been determined that the individual (1) has an expertise in teaching in their designated field, (2) has a potential for significant professional growth in the area of teaching practice, and (3) has the potential for significant contribution in one other component from service, outreach, research, or creative work.

2. Associate Teaching Professor: Associate teaching professor is a rank of distinction that is attained through successful performance of assigned duties. A candidate should hold the appropriate terminal professional degree or has the equivalent in training, ability, and experience and should meet appropriate credentialing requirements.

Criteria for promotion to associate teaching professor are specific to each department, according to provost-approved guidelines, and must be approved by the Provost's Office. Promotion decisions will be determined by the specific department head/chair and the dean of the respective college. Promotion decisions must correspond to the annual deadlines approved by the Provost's Office and reported to the Provost's Office accordingly.

3. Teaching Professor: Teaching Professor is a rank requiring professional peer recognition of the individual as an authority in their field of specialization. It is therefore expected that peers within and outside the University will attest to the candidate's high professional standing. A candidate should hold the appropriate terminal professional

degree or have the equivalent in training, ability, and experience and meet appropriate credentialing requirements.

Criteria for promotion to teaching professor are specific to each department and approved by the dean and the Provost's Office. Promotion decisions will be determined by the specific department head/chair and the dean of the respective college. Promotion decisions must correspond to the annual deadlines approved by the Provost's Office and reported to the Provost's Office accordingly.

F. Performance Evaluation: All department heads/chairs and unit heads, such as center and institute directors, shall conduct at least one annual review before April 30 with each teaching-track faculty member to evaluate their performance and to discuss their future development. For the review, the teaching faculty member will provide a current vita and any supporting material the head/chair or unit head or the teaching faculty member deems appropriate.

In the case of teaching faculty members who have not achieved promotion to associate teaching professor or teaching professor, particular care shall be taken by the department head/chair or unit head to relate the faculty member's job performance to the promotion criteria set forth in this document. Significant achievements or deficiencies that might enhance or impede the candidate's progress toward higher academic rank shall be noted.

The head/chair or unit head shall prepare a written report covering the major points of the conference. A copy of the report shall be provided to the teaching faculty member within a month of the conference. The teaching faculty member shall be asked to sign it as confirmation of having seen it. If the teaching faculty member does not agree with material in the report, they may write a response to be appended to the report. One copy of the signed report and response, if there is one, is to be retained for the teaching faculty member's departmental personnel file and copied to the Office of the Provost; another copy is to be given to the teaching faculty member. This report is to remain confidential, available only for the use of the concerned teaching faculty member and any University officials who have supervisory responsibility over the teaching faculty member.

Each department head/chair or unit head shall conduct a third-year review of all its assistant teaching professors according to college guidelines. As with the annual review, the head/chair or unit head shall request a current vita and any supporting material the head/chair or unit head or the teaching faculty member deems appropriate prior to the third-year review. The particular focus of this review is the teaching faculty member's progress toward achieving promotion. The review, therefore, must address the specific departmental/college criteria for promotion. The head/chair or unit head shall prepare a written report covering the findings of the review.

G. Promotion Criteria and Considerations for Teaching Faculty: A teaching faculty member is focused on teaching practice and has the obligation to contribute to their discipline through teaching practice and one other component from service, outreach, research, or creative work. To a large extent, each discipline and each department must determine how much and what quality of teaching practice is appropriate for promotion and judge its candidates accordingly.

H. Eligibility for Promotion: There is no fixed requirement for years of service at a given rank before a teaching faculty member can be promoted. A teaching faculty member on leave of absence without pay need not count their leave time toward promotion. Except as otherwise required by law, a teaching faculty member on leave without pay cannot be a candidate for promotion while on leave.

I. Procedure for Promotion: Promotion will be specific for each department, and criteria must be approved by the dean and the Provost's Office. Promotion decisions will be determined by the specific department, department head/chair, and the dean of the respective college. As the chief academic officer of Auburn University, the provost retains the right to review all promotions and act appropriately.

J. Terms and Continuation of Appointment: Although it has been the practice of the University for faculty appointments to be continued by mutual commitment and understanding rather than by formal contracts, teaching faculty will be appointed with written contracts. The following principles outline the policy on continuation of the contract for teaching faculty members.

All teaching title series positions are typically an initial one-year contracts that may be renewed annually. Renewal is contingent upon funding being available and upon performance. All appointees in the teaching title series will have annual, written employment contracts (unless they have multiple year contracts in effect).

All department heads/chairs and unit heads shall conduct at least one annual review with each faculty member to evaluate their performance each year of the contract and to discuss their future development. In order to review the faculty member fairly, the head/chair shall request a current vita and any supporting material the head/chair of the faculty member deems appropriate prior to the review. More frequent reviews may be conducted at the discretion of the faculty member or the department head/chair.

The initial letter of appointment should clearly define the length of the appointment, benefits, and duties/responsibilities. For purposes of recruitment and retention, well-qualified individuals identified by the department or academic unit and with the approval of the dean may be given multiple year contracts (not to exceed ten years) with the written proviso that the

continuation of teaching appointments are always based on performance and funding. The offer letter should make clear that continuation of appointment is subject to the availability of funds, the need for services, and satisfactory performance. Language that speaks to continuation beyond the initial appointment should include specific conditions. For example, the grant, contract, or income from which the teaching faculty is to be paid may be for multiple years, but rarely is funding for subsequent years guaranteed. Letters containing promises not consistent with the teaching title procedures are not enforceable unless authorized in writing by the president of Auburn University.

K. Dismissal: Termination of a teaching faculty member during the contract term shall be effected by the University only for lack of funding or adequate cause, including but not limited to lack of collegiality and unprofessional behavior. If termination during the contract term is for other than for lack of funding, then Chapter 3, Section 9.2 of this handbook provides that “Rights of due process shall also apply to a nontenured faculty member dismissed before completion of their contractual term.” Dismissal and the threat of dismissal shall not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom, Constitutional rights, or other applicable rights.

L. Noncontinuation of Appointment: The contractual period for faculty in the teaching title series is 9 months, and the university retains the right to continue or noncontinue a faculty member in the teaching series. If a teaching faculty member whose contract is not to be renewed so requests, they shall be provided with a written statement of reasons why the contract is not to be renewed. In order to ensure that noncontinuation is not used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom, an employee in the teaching nontenure-track ladder is afforded the opportunity to appeal their noncontinuation using the same procedure as provided in this handbook for tenure-track faculty members who are given letters of noncontinuation.

M. Graduate Faculty: A faculty member on appointment in the teaching title series may be proposed, recommended, and approved for membership in the graduate faculty as provided in this handbook. If an appointee in the teaching title series is approved for membership, the individual’s participation as a member of the graduate faculty shall be limited to directing graduate theses and dissertations, teaching courses that they are qualified to teach according to accreditation guidelines, and to serving on committees appointed by the dean of the Graduate School in proportion to their other assignments.

N. Conditions of Employment: A faculty member on appointment in the teaching title series is eligible for benefits as provided in this handbook or other applicable University policies, except tenure, de facto tenure, and professional improvement leave. University contributions toward retirement, social security, annual and sick leave, and insurance benefits for the faculty member shall be covered through the contract, grant, generated income, or other designated

funds that provide support for the individual's position.

O. University Membership: A teaching faculty member shall be eligible to vote on all faculty matters, including faculty appointment and promotion, but not on tenure. A teaching faculty member may vote on and/or be elected the department's representative in the University Senate.

P. Change from Nontenure-Track to Tenure-Track Faculty: If the appointment of a faculty member is changed from the teaching title series to tenure-track faculty through normal, faculty- approved, tenure-track hiring, years of service while on appointment in the teaching title series will be treated as full-time service in a faculty rank at another institution, as described in this handbook.