

### Section 3.3.4: Academic Ranks and Promotion

Academic rank is accorded to qualified individuals whose primary assignment is to any of the three major functions of the University: teaching, research/creative work, and outreach. The following general considerations apply to appointment or promotion to faculty ranks:

**Assistant Professor:** Assistant professor is the usual entry-level rank for a candidate who has completed the appropriate terminal degree (usually a doctorate) or has the equivalent in training, ability, and experience. While a terminal degree or the equivalent is required, an appointee is not required to have a minimum number of years in academic service to be eligible for the rank of assistant professor.

**Associate Professor:** Associate professor is a rank of distinction that is attained through successful performance of assigned duties. A candidate should hold the appropriate terminal degree (usually a doctorate) or the equivalent. Normally, a candidate must serve at least five complete years on full-time appointment at the assistant professor level before they may be nominated for promotion to associate professor. Prior faculty service at other colleges or universities or prior service in appropriate professional activities may qualify for consideration in meeting the requirement for years in rank for promotion. A candidate who is especially meritorious may be recommended for early promotion by the department head/chair with majority support of the faculty who hold rank superior to that of the candidate

A candidate for associate professor should have demonstrated mastery of the subject matter of their field and the ability to apply it well in the primary area(s) to which they are assigned, whether in teaching, research/creative work, or outreach. Additionally, the candidate should have contributed, typically through significant scholarly or creative work, to their area of specialization; participated in professional life; and served on departmental, college or school, and/or University committees. Through their scholarly and professional activity, the candidate should demonstrate an emerging stature as a regional or national authority.

**Professor:** Professor is a rank requiring professional peer recognition of the individual as an authority in their field of specialization. A candidate must be recognized by associates as a capable teacher, scholar or artist, or outreach specialist. 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 degree (usually a doctorate) or the equivalent. Normally, a candidate must serve at least four complete years on full-time appointment at the associate professor level before they may be nominated for promotion to professor. Only in exceptional and well-documented cases in which a faculty member has met requirements for promotion to professor in a shorter time should they be recommended for early promotion by the department head/chair, with majority support of the faculty members who hold rank superior to that of the candidate.

A candidate for professor should have demonstrated significant involvement in the teaching, research/creative work, or outreach functions of the University. They should also have participated in professional life and have been actively involved in departmental, college, and University affairs. For this rank it is essential that the candidate should have demonstrated a marked degree of scholarship appropriate to their assignment through work, typically publication or creative endeavor, subjected to peer review. By means of such activity, a candidate for the University's highest academic rank should have a respected national reputation.

**Auburn Professor:** Auburn Professor is a rank requiring an exceptional record of achievement. It represents the highest level of distinction at Auburn University; promotion to it should be a rare occurrence reserved for exceptional professors.

Promotion to the rank of Auburn Professor is available to tenured Professors, Clinical Professors, Research Professors, and Extension Professors, each with at least five full years in rank. This promotion comes with a minimum 10% base salary increase.

The candidates for promotion to the rank of Auburn Professor should hold the appropriate terminal degree (usually a doctorate) or the equivalent. They must have an exceptional record of achievement in most of the areas of teaching, research, publication, outreach, and service. An exceptional record of achievement is one that places the candidate at the top of his or her discipline. It is therefore expected that peers outside the University will attest to the candidate's

pre-eminent standing in her or his field, so the nominee's department chair/head will procure at least three letters of external support from distinguished experts in the nominee's field who can speak to the nominee's work and impact in her or his discipline. Each letter from an outside evaluator must be accompanied by a short biography of the expert that also explains her or his relationship to the nominee. The letters from all outside evaluators shall remain confidential and shall not be made available to candidates at any time.

All nominations shall originate from the unit chair/head, and the schedule and procedure for nominating to the rank of Auburn Professor will follow that of the Promotion and Tenure process. Schools and departments (where they exist) can nominate up to one candidate per year. The dean of each college shall appoint a committee of departmental heads and/or senior scholars, broadly representative of the college's units, to assess all nominations to the rank of Auburn Professor and select which one should proceed.

In the first year, nominations made by the academic colleges and the Libraries will be sent directly to the provost and University president for final action. Thereafter, nominations made by the academic colleges and the Libraries will be sent to the provost, who will present the files for consideration to a committee of the whole consisting of all faculty at the rank of Auburn Professor. This committee shall send its recommendations, along with the candidates' dossiers, to the University president for review and final approval.

Nominations will include the candidates' Standard Biographical Data Sheet, curriculum vitae (formatted to meet the requirements for promotion to professor), letters of support from distinguished experts outside the University, and a summary letter written by the college committee.