

12.01.01.K1 Institutional Rules for Implementing Tenure



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Rule Summary

This rule, required by System Regulation *12.01.01, Institutional Rules for Implementing Tenure*, describes the process by which tenure-track faculty members may be awarded tenure.

Rule

1. TENURE STANDARDS

- 1.1 Faculty members are provided with written standards for promotion and tenure upon hire.
- 1.2 Only faculty members employed in tenure-track faculty positions such as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Endowed Professor, or others distinguished by the university are eligible for consideration for the granting of tenure.

2. WRITTEN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- 2.1 All new faculty members must be provided with an appointment letter stating the initial terms and conditions of employment, including the details of their tenure status and consideration of prior service credit, if any. Subsequent modifications or special understandings concerning the appointment, which may be made on an annual basis, should be stated in writing and a copy given to the faculty member. All tenured and tenure-track faculty members, unless the terms and conditions of their appointment letter state otherwise, are expected to engage in teaching, research and scholarly activities, professional growth activities, and service.
- 2.2 Essential job functions for a position may vary depending upon the nature of the department in which the faculty member holds expertise, external funding requirements attached to the position, licensing or accreditation requirements, and other circumstances. Therefore, it is important that essential job functions for each faculty position be listed in the initial appointment letter.
- 2.3 The appointment letter for a faculty member with administrative duties will state the portion of the faculty member's salary that is associated with the administrative duties. It will also state that the administrative duties may be removed without cause.

- 2.4 All appointment letters must indicate whether the appointment being offered is with tenure, tenure-accruing, or non-tenure accruing, as specified in Section 3.1 of System Policy *12.01 Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure*.

3. BASIS FOR EVALUATION

- 3.1 All continuation and tenure recommendations must include a review of the faculty member's record of professional achievement.
- 3.2 The university will publish its list of criteria applicable to the evaluation of faculty for the granting of tenure and promotion.
- 3.3 Tenure and promotion evaluations are primarily based on teaching effectiveness, research and scholarly activity, professional growth activities, and service. See also System Regulation 12.01.01 Section 5 *Institutional Rules for Implementing Tenure*. Other criteria may be applicable, depending on the nature of the faculty appointment, and as specified in the appointment letter.
 - 3.3.1 Evaluation of teaching effectiveness is essential for all candidates.
 - 3.3.2 Evaluation of teaching effectiveness will include not only student evaluations of faculty, but also necessary and appropriate techniques as cited in System Policy *12.06 Post-Tenure Review of Faculty and Teaching Effectiveness*.

4. TENURE AND PROMOTION COMMITTEES

Tenure and promotion committees are formed at the department and college levels, as applicable, to provide peer-review evaluations of tenure-track faculty for continuation and tenure.

- 4.1 The department tenure and promotion committee is comprised of all tenured faculty members in the tenure or continuation candidate's department. The department chair calls the meeting of the committee but is thereafter prohibited from serving or voting as a committee member. Once convened, the committee elects the committee chair by a secret ballot of all members present.
 - 4.1.1 If no department organization exists, the evaluation of the tenure or continuation candidate will be conducted at the college level.
 - 4.1.2 If the department has no tenured faculty members to act as the department tenure and promotion committee, the evaluation will be performed by the department chair, then at the college level. However, if a department has one tenured faculty member, that member may exercise the right to be the sole member of the department tenure and promotion committee. With or without a department tenure and promotion committee, the department chair will provide their own evaluation of each candidate.
- 4.2 The college tenure and promotion committee is assembled by the candidate's college dean. It comprises of at least five tenured faculty members and must include at least one tenured faculty member from each department. The dean is prohibited from serving or

voting as a committee member. The committee chair will be elected by secret ballot of all members present.

5. PEER/TENURE REVIEW PROCESS

- 5.1 Applications for tenure are evaluated by the department tenure and promotion committee, department chair, college tenure and promotion committee, college dean, provost, and president. The Board of Regents (board) of The Texas A&M University System (system) grants tenure.

Each probationary (tenure-track) faculty member is responsible for developing and submitting an annual report (for continuation) or submitting the tenure package (final year of tenure track). The purpose of the annual performance review is to facilitate dialogue between the administration and faculty and provide a process to evaluate the faculty member's accomplishments in the context of departmental, college, university, and system goals. An unsatisfactory rating in any one area for a probationary faculty member (e.g., teaching effectiveness, research, creative activities and other scholarly endeavors, professional growth activities, or service) will require the implementation of a written short-term development plan for the faculty member, including performance improvement benchmarks. The development plan serves as a guide for the faculty member to achieve their professional goals. In the written narrative, the chair and dean will suggest specific actions that the faculty member will need to take to achieve performance objectives in the next year. The plan will consider the minimum requirements for tenure in the area of the unsatisfactory rating and will include resources that will assist the faculty member in attaining the performance objectives. If the faculty member does not show progress toward achieving the performance objectives, action will be taken to non-renew the appointment prior to the final tenure review (6th year).

- 5.2 Situations may arise when a faculty member will hold a joint appointment between two different departments or within multiple system agencies. The department heads of each concurrent department should collaborate to provide specific details of the evaluation criteria for the joint appointment.

5.2.1 Faculty members holding concurrent appointments in two or more departments will be evaluated by the department and college where tenure, if awarded, will be held.

5.2.2 Faculty members will be evaluated based on the criteria established between the two department heads. The evaluation should include input from both department heads.

- 5.3 Each tenure-track faculty member will undergo annual performance reviews for tenure continuation in the spring semester of their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years of actual and credited service. The 5th year review will occur in the fall semester of the 5th year of actual and credited service, in order to provide timely feedback to the faculty member. These reviews, based on the annual report submitted by the faculty member, will be performed by the department tenure and promotion committee, the department chair, the college tenure and promotion committee, and the college dean. The tenure and promotion

committees will vote via secret ballot either “for”, “against”, or “abstain.” The tenure and promotion committees will also provide a written narrative that explicitly communicates the basis for the committees’ decision.

- 5.4 In the fall semester of the 4th year of actual and credited service, in lieu of the annual performance review, all tenure-track faculty members must receive a comprehensive review to determine progress toward meeting all tenure requirements in the tenure-track appointment. The 4th year review is performed by the department tenure and promotion committee, department chair, college tenure and promotion committee, and college dean.
 - 5.4.1 The faculty member should undergo the 4th year tenure review during the 4th year of actual and credited service. If, for example, a faculty member beginning employment at Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) receives two years credit toward tenure for previous teaching, the faculty member will undergo the 4th year review in the second year of service at TAMUK.
 - 5.4.2 If the 4th year review finds that a tenure-track faculty member is not progressing adequately toward the requirements for tenure, action should be taken to non-renew the appointment of the individual.
- 5.5 Generally, all faculty members are entitled under Texas law to see their personnel files and to obtain a copy of the information in these files at their own expense.
- 5.6 The tenure review and recommendation will be made during the 6th year of actual and credited service at the university.
 - 5.6.1 The probationary period (tenure-track) for a faculty must not exceed seven years.
 - 5.6.2 Generally, a maximum of two years of credit towards tenure may be considered unless the candidate demonstrates an exceptional research record and/or several years in a previous tenure track role that would justify additional years of credit. This will be negotiated during the hiring process and included in the faculty appointment letter.
 - 5.6.3 If an individual joins the faculty at mid-year, the prospective faculty member, chair and dean will negotiate whether or not a year of credit for that partial year will be counted toward promotion and tenure. This agreement will be explicitly stated in the appointment letter.
 - 5.6.4 The evaluation period is from the date of appointment to the tenure-track position to the date the faculty member submits their materials for review.
 - 5.6.5 The tenure-track faculty member being considered for tenure must follow guidelines for assembly, format and submission of a dossier according to the timelines set by the provost’s Office and outlined on the [Promotion, Tenure & Post-Tenure Review](#) website.
 - 5.6.6 Committee structure and voting, as well as administrative evaluations, will occur as described above for years 1 through 5. The dean will forward ballot results and written narratives to the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs.

5.6.7 The provost and senior vice president for academic affairs will review all materials and forward recommendations, along with their own recommendations to the university president.

5.6.8 The president will then review the materials and forward their positive recommendations regarding the awarding of tenure to the board.

5.6.9 Tenure is granted only by an affirmative vote of the board.

6. NOTIFICATION

6.1 Following a candidate's tenure (6th year) or continuation (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th year) review by the department tenure and promotion committee, the committee will forward the results of its vote and a narrative to the department chair.

6.2 The department chair will forward the results of the department tenure and promotion committee vote and narrative, along with their recommendations in a written narrative to the college dean.

6.3 Through the 5th year, whether or not to continue a probationary faculty member on tenure track is decided by the college dean. The dean will notify the faculty member of reappointment or non-reappointment. The dean will also inform the candidate of the vote count and any recommendations from the tenure and promotion committees and from the department chair.

6.4 For the tenure evaluation (6th year), this information will be forwarded to the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs and then to the president as described in Sections 5.6.6 and 5.6.7 of this rule. The faculty member will be copied on the communication of this information. The president or designee will convey their decision to the faculty member.

6.5 Per System Policy 12.01, Section 4.1, if the decision is not to award tenure, the faculty member is entitled to serve for two additional long semesters following the term or semester in which the notice is received.

6.6 Faculty members should be notified promptly of tenure denial. No rights are accrued by the faculty member as a result of the university's failure to notify.

6.7 Faculty may appeal a decision of appointment non-renewal. Notification of a faculty member's intention to appeal must be sent to the provost and senior vice president of academic affairs within 10 business days from the notification of appointment non-renewal. The conditions and procedures for an appeal are explained in Academic Affairs Academic Operating Procedure 1, *Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure*.

7. EXCEPTIONS

7.1 During the faculty tenure track period, the university permits a "time-out" due to special conditions or to pursue a special opportunity. The time-out extension must be based on extraordinary circumstances and requires written concurrence by the faculty member, department chair, college dean, and provost. The procedure to request an extension of the

tenure probation period is found in University Rule *12.01.99.K1, Extension of the Tenure Probation Period*.

- 7.2 In some instances, the university may wish to grant a faculty member or administrator tenure on hire. In such instances, the department having expertise closely related to the candidate's expertise should render a decision, through the dean of the respective college, to the provost regarding the tenurability of the candidate, based on the candidate's qualifications and record of performance in their discipline. A positive recommendation from the department is subject to recommendation from the provost, president, and lastly, the board for final approval. Tenure, if granted, would reside in the academic department and would not apply to the administrative position.
 - 7.2.1 Faculty applicants requesting tenure on hire must hold a tenured faculty position in good standing, hold a current rank of associate or full professor, and have at least six years of full-time service at an accredited college or university.
 - 7.2.2 A person who is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and/or the U.S. National Academy of Engineering and/or the U.S. National Academy of Medicine at the time of employment will be eligible for tenure upon arrival and will be presented to the system board for its consideration, and a grant of tenure to such faculty member will not be subject to a probationary period.
- 7.3 Cases of bona fide financial exigency or the reduction or discontinuance of an institutional program based on educational considerations may permit exceptions to tenure policies and procedures.
 - 7.3.1 Bona fide financial exigency means a pressing need to reorder the nature and magnitude of financial obligations in such a way as to restore or preserve the financial stability of the institution.
 - 7.3.2 Financial stability means the ability of the institution to provide from current income the funds necessary to meet current expenses, including current debt payments and sound reserves, without invading or depleting capital.
 - 7.3.3 Evidence of financial exigency may include but is not limited to, substantially declining enrollments, substantial revenue cutbacks, and substantial ongoing budget deficits.
 - 7.3.4 Educational considerations that could result in the reduction or discontinuance of a program may include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) a substantial decrease in program enrollment;
 - (b) the need to shift substantial resources to other programs; or
 - (c) a substantial modification or redirection of a unit's mission.
 - 7.3.5 Cases where exceptions to this policy are proposed due to financial exigency or due to educational considerations will be considered first by the University Tenure and Promotion Appeals committee. This faculty committee is made up of representative tenured faculty members from across the university and is formed

with input from Faculty Senate. The committee will submit their recommendations regarding the proposal to the provost and president.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[System Policy 12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure](#)

[System Policy 12.01.01, Institutional Rules for Implementing Tenure](#)

[System Policy 12.06, Post-Tenure Review of Faculty and Teaching Effectiveness](#)

[University Rule 12.01.99.K1, Extension of the Tenure Probation Period](#)

[Academic Affairs Academic Operating Procedure 1, Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure](#)

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