

**Austin Peay State  
University**

## **Policy on Academic Promotion**

**Issued:** May 30, 2019

**Responsible** Provost and Vice President for Academic

**Official:** Affairs

**Responsible Office:** Academic Affairs

## **POLICIES**

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### **Policy Statement**

Promotion in rank is recognition of past achievement of the individual being considered for promotion. In addition, the advancement in rank is recognition of future potential and a sign of confidence that the individual is capable of even greater accomplishments and of assuming greater responsibilities. It is the policy of Austin Peay State University to make promotions strictly on consideration of merit tempered by University and fiscal considerations.

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to help ensure that promotions are made objectively, equitably, impartially, and as recognition of merit in line with the following policy guidelines. The President of APSU is responsible for the master staffing plan of the University. In developing such a plan, the President will consider the fiscal impact of each promotion, that is, resources allocated and distributed to the University.

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### **Contents**

#### **Definitions**

- Academic Assignment
- Scholarly and Creative Achievement
- Professional Contributions and Activities

#### **Procedures**

- Promotion Criteria
- The Evaluation Process
- Academic Ranks for Instructors Tracks
- Academic Ranks for Professor Tracks
- Exceptions to Minimum Ranks Qualifications

- Terminal Degree Designation
- General Process Guidelines at University Level
- Withdrawals
- Optional Written Responses

### **Links**

- APSU Policy 1:025

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## **Definitions**

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### **Academic Assignment**

Teaching applies to any strategy in which information is imparted so that others may learn, and may include, but is not limited to, a variety of techniques including instruction; student advising and/or mentoring; development of course materials and courseware; and development of innovative approaches to instruction.

### **Scholarly and Creative Achievement**

Research applies to the studious inquiry, examination, or discovery that contributes to disciplinary and interdisciplinary bodies of knowledge. Scholarly and Creative Achievement may include, but are not limited to, disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities that focus on the boundaries of knowledge; field-based scholarship; creative activities (e.g. film-making, performances, or other artistic creations); and the development of cutting-edge teaching approaches.

### **Professional Contributions and Activities**

Service applies to involvement within the community as defined by the University's role and mission; service to the University; and service within the bounds of the applicant's academic discipline and budgeted assignment.

\*\*A more detailed description of these activities and the criteria to be applied in assessing performance in these three areas may be found in APSU Policy No. 1:025 "Policy on Academic Tenure," Criteria To Be Considered In Tenure Recommendations. Faculty are also required to consult the APSU *Tenure Procedures and Guidelines* document.

[https://www.apsu.edu/sites/apsu.edu/files/academic-affairs/Tenure\\_Procedures\\_and\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.apsu.edu/sites/apsu.edu/files/academic-affairs/Tenure_Procedures_and_Guidelines.pdf)

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## **Procedures**

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### **Promotion Criteria**

The academic departments and programs of APSU must develop written guidelines with specific criteria for evaluating the faculty in academic assignment, scholarly and creative achievement and

professional contributions and activities. The departmental and program guidelines cannot be less rigorous than University guidelines. These departmental and program guidelines should be distributed to all new faculty members and should be easily available at all times, preferably via the Web. Whenever the guidelines are revised, the faculty should be notified of the availability of the revised guidelines. The University promotion guidelines for evaluation should use the same criteria as those identified for tenure and located in APSU Policy No. 1:025 “Policy on Academic Tenure.”

### **The Evaluation Process**

The evaluation process for academic promotion at APSU will follow the guidelines established for academic tenure as identified in APSU Policy No. 1:025 “Policy on Academic Tenure.”

A faculty member (below rank of Professor) shall receive a promotion review at all levels of the University at least once every five (5) years unless such review is contrary to the wishes of the faculty member. Faculty who wish to apply for promotion should inform their chairperson/director in writing of their intent in the semester prior to the one in which they will apply for promotion.

The evaluation process for academic promotion at APSU will follow the guidelines established for academic tenure as identified in APSU Policy No. 1:025, “Policy on Academic Tenure” and the Tenure Procedures and Guidelines document with the following exceptions:

- A.** Persons to be considered for Promotion. Every eligible faculty member that has given written notice of intent shall be reviewed by the appropriate departmental promotions committee, unless the faculty member requests not to be reviewed.
- B.** Committee Membership. No faculty member shall vote on or participate in promotion deliberations relative to colleagues seeking promotion to higher rank than those voting at the departmental level, that is, faculty members voting to promote a faculty member to Associate Professor, for example, must already be at the rank of Associate Professor or above it to be eligible to vote on the faculty member requesting to be promoted to Associate. Only tenured faculty members shall serve on a promotion committee at any level. At the college level,

only tenured full Professors are eligible to serve on the college promotions committee.

Exception: Chairs who are lower in rank than the candidate on whom they are voting and writing independent reports may participate in the RTP processes of candidates under review for Associate professor or Professor. All faculty are under the supervision of their chair and shall receive an independent chair's report as part of the review.

However, chairs at the rank of Associate may not actively participate in the personnel meeting of a candidate for Professor other than to provide an overview at the front of the meeting of such a candidate's strengths and weaknesses when requested by committee members. Similarly, chairs at the rank of Assistant Professor may not actively participate in the personnel meeting of a candidate for Associate Professor other than to provide an overview at the front of the meeting of such a candidate's strengths and weaknesses when requested by committee members. Chairs in these circumstances shall convene the RTP meeting and then must leave the room after introductory comments and reviewing personnel meeting protocols.

#### C. Recommendations.

The department chair must notify the Dean in writing of the voting results of all negative recommendations. The Dean shall notify the Provost in writing of the voting results of all negative recommendations made at the department and college levels. Each of the forms related to promotion contains the voting record.

#### D. Appeals.

Faculty members seeking promotion may only appeal a negative promotion decision by the Provost to the University Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board.

### **Academic Ranks for Instructor Tracks**

The instructor and professor tracks are distinct and independent lines of employment at Austin Peay State University.

The following are criteria that distinguish among academic ranks.

**1. Instructor**

- a. Demonstrated ability in instruction and student development.
- b. Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
- c. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

**2. Senior Instructor**

- a. Documented evidence of high quality teaching and contribution to student development.
- b. Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
- c. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

**3. Master Instructor**

- a. Documented evidence of teaching excellence and superior contribution to student development.
- b. Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
- c. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

**Academic Ranks for  
Professor Track**

The following are criteria that distinguish among academic ranks

**1. Assistant Professor**

- a. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
- b. Evidence of potential ability in academic assignment and/or scholarly and creative achievement, and/or professional contributions and activities.
- c. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

**2. Associate Professor (see NOTE at end of section)**

- a. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline

or related area.

- b. Documented evidence of high quality professional productivity at Austin Peay State University which may lead to national recognition in the academic discipline, and/or consonant with the goals of the University and of the academic unit to which the faculty member belongs. Any exceptions to this requirement will need the written approval of the Provost.
- c. Documented evidence of ability in academic assignment and/or scholarly and creative achievement, and/or professional contributions and activities at Austin Peay State University. Any exceptions to this requirement will need the written approval of the Provost.
- d. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.
- e. For faculty beginning employment with Austin Peay State University in the fall of academic year 2019-2020 or later, at least six (6) years of full-time status in the rank of Assistant Professor is required before attaining the rank of Associate Professor. Any exceptions to this requirement will need the written approval of the Provost.
- f. Additionally, the faculty member seeking a promotion exception to the six-year rule (6) shall submit in writing a substantive narrative rationale, aligned with published departmental criteria, no later than ninety (90) business days before faculty begin updates to the e-dossier as prescribed in the Calendar for Faculty Personnel Actions.

If the Provost allows the exception, the Provost shall provide a clear written statement to the faculty member's chair either granting the exception or denying the exception. The Provost shall provide this letter prior to the faculty member's organization of the e-dossier and formal submission for promotion to Associate Professor.

If the Provost denies the exception, the faculty member shall not proceed with the application for promotion. Copies of the letter denying the exception shall be provided to the faculty member, his or her chair, the Dean of the college, and the Office of Academic Affairs.

If the Provost grants the exception, the faculty member under review may proceed with the application for promotion and shall also include this letter within the e-dossier following his/her statement of intent. The faculty member's statement of intent shall refer to the exception to the normal six-year wait period prior to application for Associate Professor. In no way shall the Provost's letter approving the exception to apply for promotion be construed by any personnel committee to be a guarantee that the faculty member's application to promotion will be successful. That determination is made by the various levels of review within the normal retention, tenure, and promotion channels currently in place at the university.

**NOTE:** For faculty who began employment with Austin Peay State University in the fall of academic year 2017-2018 through academic year 2018-2019, at least four (4) years of full-time faculty status at Austin Peay State University at the rank of Assistant Professor shall be the normal expectation for attainment of rank of Associate Professor. In addition to this minimum length of service, faculty members who wish to apply for promotion shall adhere to the standards prescribed in the current RTP criteria governing promotion in their department. Faculty members who are hired at the rank of Assistant Professor shall be eligible to apply for promotion to Associate in the fall semester of their fourth year, although the actual rank awarded shall not be in effect until the fifth year.

For example, a faculty member beginning employment at Austin Peay State University in the Fall semester of 2018 at the rank of Assistant Professor may apply for promotion to Associate Professor no earlier than the fall

semester of 2021, with attainment of Associate Professor rank in Fall 2022.

Faculty who find themselves in anomalous situations (e.g. faculty on leaves of absence or faculty who have stopped the tenure clock) and are seeking promotion must consult with the Provost and the Office of Academic Affairs for a ruling on the appropriate date for application. Any exceptions to the minimum requirements described above shall require the written approval of the Provost.

### **3. Professor (see NOTE at end of section)**

- a. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
- b. Documented evidence of sustained high quality professional productivity at Austin Peay State University and national recognition in the academic discipline or sustained high quality professional productivity in the academic discipline at Austin Peay State University that is consonant with the goals of the University and of the academic unit to which the faculty member belongs. Any exceptions to this requirement will need the written approval of the Provost.
- c. Documented evidence of teaching excellence and superior contribution to student development or superior scholarly and creative achievement at Austin Peay State University will contribute to the positive record of the candidate for advancement to the rank of professor. Any exceptions to this requirement will need the written approval of the Provost. Since there is no higher rank, promotion to professor is taken with great care and requires a level of achievement beyond that required for associate professor. This rank is not a reward for long service; rather it is recognition of superior achievement within the discipline with every expectation of continuing contribution to the University and the larger academic community.

- d. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity, and a high degree of academic maturity and responsibility.
- e. At least five (5) years of faculty status at the rank of Associate Professor at Austin Peay State University shall be the requirement for promotion to Full Professor. Any exceptions to this requirement will require the written approval of the Provost. Additionally, the faculty member seeking a promotion exception to the five year (5) rule shall submit in writing a substantive narrative rationale, aligned with published departmental criteria, no later than ninety (90) business days before faculty begin updates to the e-dossier as prescribed in the Calendar for Faculty Personnel Actions.

If the Provost allows the exception, the Provost shall provide a clear written statement to the faculty member's chair either granting the exception or denying the exception. The Provost shall provide this letter prior to the faculty member's organization of the e-dossier and formal submission for promotion to Professor.

If the Provost denies the exception, the faculty member shall not proceed with the application for promotion. Copies of the letter denying the exception shall be provided to the faculty member, his or her chair, the Dean of the college, and the Office of Academic Affairs.

If the Provost grants the exception, the faculty member under review may proceed with the application for promotion and shall include this letter within the e-dossier following his/her statement of intent. The faculty member's statement of intent shall refer to the exception to the normal five year wait period prior to application for Professor.

In no way shall the Provost's letter approving the exception to apply for promotion be construed by any personnel committee to be a guarantee that the faculty member's application to be promoted will be successful. That determination is made by the

various levels of review within the normal retention, tenure, and promotion channels currently in place at the university.

**NOTE:** At least five (5) years of full-time faculty status at Austin Peay State University at the rank of Associate Professor shall be the normal expectation for attainment of rank of Professor. In addition to this minimum length of service, faculty members who wish to apply for promotion shall adhere to the standards prescribed in the current RTP criteria governing promotion in their department. Faculty members who are hired at the rank of Associate Professor shall be eligible to apply for promotion to Professor as early as their fifth year, although the actual rank awarded shall not be in effect until the sixth year.

For example, a faculty member who is hired at Austin Peay State University or has attained the rank of Associate Professor in the Fall of 2018 may apply for promotion to Professor no earlier than the fall semester of 2022, but the promotion will go into effect fall 2023.

Faculty who find themselves in anomalous situations (e.g. faculty on leaves of absence or faculty who have stopped the tenure clock) and are seeking promotion must consult with the Provost and the Office of Academic Affairs for a ruling on the appropriate date for application. Any exceptions to the minimum requirements described above shall require the written approval of the Provost.

### **Exceptions to Minimum Rank Qualifications**

The minimum rank qualifications should be met in every recommendation regarding appointment to academic rank and for promotion in academic rank. In extraordinary circumstances, if the faculty member receives recommendations by the departmental and college promotions committees and Provost that clearly state the recommendation is by exception as part of the regular evaluation process, the Provost may grant an approval to the exception to minimum rank. However, such exceptions are not encouraged and should be granted only upon a showing of a candidate's exceptional merit and/or other extraordinary circumstances, such as an objective need to deviate from these minimum qualifications in filling positions and/or retaining otherwise qualified faculty within certain academic disciplines.

Petitions for exceptions to promotional criteria may include consideration of the appropriateness of the degree or extraordinary qualities that the candidate may possess. The equivalent work experience credit may include relevant teaching experience or other experiences such as experience gained as an administrator, counselor, librarian, or the like.

**Terminal Degree Designation**

The APSU Board of Trustees will use national discipline standards to determine which degrees are considered to be “terminal” within each discipline and will provide APSU with a list that delineates these degrees. The APSU Board of Trustees affords APSU the opportunity to request blanket exceptions to these standards by classification based upon its mission and hiring practice. APSU may also petition the Board for “equivalent work experience credit” when a candidate has not obtained a terminal degree, but has a record of extraordinary achievement in a given field. The equivalent work experience credit may include relevant teaching experience or other experiences such as experience gained as an administrator, counselor, librarian, journeyman, or the like.

**General Process Guidelines at University Level**

So that the decision process can be as objective as possible, each recommendation (forwarded from the department or program to a higher administrative level in the University) should be accompanied by complete and careful documentation of the candidate’s performance in academic assignment, and/or scholarly and creative achievement, and/or professional contributions and activities. Although the three areas of evaluation—academic assignment, scholarly and creative achievement, and professional contributions and activities—are all considered important, certain exceptions may exist where evaluation may occur in one or the other area exclusively.

In these cases, as well as in the general case, appropriate supervisory personnel shall clearly and adequately document the facts which justify the individual's promotion. The academic department or program may, if it deems it desirable, include information relative to the candidate's research activities, publication record, exceptional administrative performance, or other types of contributions. Additional procedures may be used by APSU with approval of the APSU Board of Trustees. For example, APSU may wish to establish an interdisciplinary, University-level promotion review committee to review the individual unit recommendations.

## **Withdrawals and Optional Department-Level Promotion Written Responses**

The faculty member may withdraw a promotion e-dossier from further consideration at any level at any time. Applications for promotion go forward unless withdrawn by the faculty member. For example, when the department committee submits a negative recommendation, the faculty member may decide to withdraw the e-dossier from further consideration until the faculty member chooses to apply for promotion at a later date. When the faculty member applies at a future date for promotion, the faculty member is required to include an explanation for the missing administrative reviews from levels beyond the department. This explanation shall be the first item within the “Prior Administrative Reviews” section of the faculty member’s e-dossier.

At the departmental level during the promotion process, a faculty member may submit a two-page written response only in cases of two negative recommendations, and the e-dossier shall move forward. However, the faculty member may choose not to submit a two-page written response, and the e-dossier will move forward, or the faculty member can withdraw his/her e-dossier.

Because applying for promotion is optional, the faculty member may choose to submit an e-dossier and apply for promotion at a later date. However, the official recorded actions (reports and votes etc.) of all previous submissions shall be included within the faculty member’s subsequent e-dossiers for promotion.

All formal appeals to the University Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board within the retention, tenure, and promotion process must offer a substantive, narrative rationale as the basis of the appeal. A very brief document containing a statement such as “I appeal this decision” is not helpful to review committees examining the appeal. If the faculty member persists and still submits a one-sentence or very brief appeal (as described above), the University Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board shall disregard that appeal. In their report, the University Tenure and Promotion Appeals Board shall provide a brief explanation for non-consideration of the faculty member’s formal appeal based on lack of sufficient documentation and substance.

## **Optional Written Responses College Level Promotion**

At the college level during the promotion process, a faculty member may submit an optional two-page written response only

in cases of two negative recommendations, and the e-dossier shall move forward. However, the faculty member may choose not to submit a two-page written response, and the e-dossier can move forward or the faculty member can withdraw his/her e-dossier.

When a college-level review has been fully completed with recommendations from the departmental committee and the Chair, the e-dossier may be withdrawn from further consideration until the faculty member chooses to apply for promotion at a later date. Under these circumstances, the e-dossier will not automatically move forward. When the faculty member applies at a future date for promotion, the faculty member shall be required to include an explanation for the missing administrative reviews from levels beyond the college. This explanation shall be the first item within the "Prior Administrative Reviews" section of the faculty member's e-dossier.

If review committee members at the college level have access to an e-dossier prior to the inclusion of the faculty member's written response, the review committee shall be informed by the individual convening the meeting (at the college level, this individual is the Dean, or his/her designee) that the faculty member has written a response to the negative decision from the level below.

Because applying for promotion is optional, the faculty member may choose to submit an e-dossier and apply for promotion at a later date. However, the official recorded actions (reports and votes etc.) of all previous submissions shall be included within the faculty member's subsequent e-dossiers for promotion.

### **Review Process for Fixed-Term Faculty**

Annual review by the chair/director/supervisor is required for Fixed-Term Faculty. Review by a departmental/school faculty committee is required prior to (1) reappointment to a new fixed term, (2) advancement to a higher rank (clinical-track and research-track only), or (3) non-reappointment during a fixed term. Annual renewal within a fixed term does not require a committee review.

For Fixed-Term Faculty, appointment to a higher rank will occur at the beginning of a new fixed term once the criteria for the higher rank have been met. Advancement in rank requires a

recommendation from the chair/director/supervisor, a departmental review committee, the dean, and the provost.

**Links**

**APSU Policy 1:025**

[https://www.apsu.edu/policy/1s\\_governance\\_organization\\_and\\_general\\_policies/1025-policy-academic-tenure.php](https://www.apsu.edu/policy/1s_governance_organization_and_general_policies/1025-policy-academic-tenure.php)

**Revision Dates**

APSU Policy 2:063 – Rev.: May 30, 2019  
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 APSU Policy 2:063 – Rev.: July 26, 2016  
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 APSU Policy 2:063 – Issued: August 10, 2012

**Subject Areas:**

Academic	Finance	General	Human Resources	Information Technology	Student Affairs
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**Approved**

President: signature on file