

Proposed Revisions to the 2020 Faculty Handbook

April 7, 2021

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Revision notes: New, or substantially new, language is shown in green solid underline. Content that has been moved is shown in blue dotted underline. Deleted language is shown in ~~red strike through~~. This is not a completely tracked changes document. For comparison, please read the 2020 Faculty Handbook for the original language. https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/bbcswebdav/xid-117354535_1

CHAPTER I. UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION

1.3.3 Colleges and Schools

[Note: Some parts of this section were revised and approved by the BOV in March, 2021. The approved language is incorporated here.]

[Note: no changes to the first two paragraphs. The revision to b. incorporates content from 2.1.9 Faculty with Governance Responsibilities, which is recommended to be deleted.]

The faculties of colleges/schools, together with their Deans, determine the processes and procedures of governance they will employ, consistent with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook. All colleges/schools, and if so sub-divided, each of their academic subdivisions, must act in accordance with the best traditions of the academic profession and within the following guidelines, which prescribe that they

- a. operate in an open and democratic manner;
- b. define ~~their own~~ any extensions of voting membership and governance responsibilities for faculty who are not full-time;
- c. adopt bylaws or standing rules that are published and made available to all members and that undergo periodic review and that include procedures and define eligibility for faculty participation in the activities specified in this Handbook;
- d. meet often enough to ensure good communication and the timely conduct of business;
- e. hold meetings that follow an agenda distributed in advance;
- f. record the proceedings of the meetings in minutes that are distributed to and approved by the faculty.

1.3.6 ~~Definition of~~ Local Academic Units (LAU) and Primary Affiliation

[Note: Some parts of this section were revised and approved by the BOV in March, 2021. The approved language is incorporated here.]

[Note: the sentence in blue font has been moved here from Section 2.1.9 Faculty with Governance Responsibilities, which is recommended to be deleted.]

[Note: All full-time faculty possess...voting rights". This is similar to saying "all adults over 21 have voting rights in this state", but that does not mean you can vote in the Independent's primary election if you are not a registered member of the Independent's party.]

The term "local academic unit" refers to an academic department, an academic school, or to a college/school without subdivision. In this *Handbook* the chief administrative officers of local academic units are generically called "local unit administrators."

Although a faculty member's tenure resides in the University as a whole (see [Section 2.1.1](#)), in recognition of disciplinary qualifications and for purposes of governance, term, tenure-track and tenured faculty are appointed directly and specifically to one or more local academic units. The status established by such an appointment to a local academic unit is called "primary affiliation." Primary affiliation in one local academic unit does not preclude the possibility of additional part-time or full-time assignments to other local academic units. An appointment to primary affiliation requires the concurrence of the faculty of the local academic unit to which the appointment is to be made and may not be transferred from one local academic unit to another except with the concurrence of the faculty of the unit to which a transfer is proposed.

All full-time faculty possess governance responsibilities and voting rights in local academic units in which they hold primary affiliation and in the larger units of which their local academic units are a part. The local level of governance is the most important in the University for the faculty's direct exercise of professional and peer judgment. Faculties of local academic units actively participate in decision-making about academic matters, matters of faculty status, and organizational and institutional change. They have primary responsibility for such academic matters as unit reorganization, the design of programs, development and alteration of the curriculum, standards for admission to programs, and requirements in the major. They play a primary role in such matters of faculty status as the recruitment and initial appointment of new faculty; the reappointment/renewal, promotion, and tenure of members; and in the case of academic departments or schools, the selection of the department chair or school director, respectively.

CHAPTER II. FACULTY PERSONNEL MATTERS

2.1 Faculty Appointments

The university's strategic goals are met by appointing faculty with varying contributions to the research, scholarship, teaching and service missions. The number of tenure-line and term faculty appointments will be based on the needs of the academic units and/or the university, while assuring that accreditation standards are met and that our position as a Research I: Doctoral University is strengthened. This section defines the various types of faculty appointment at George Mason University. *[Note: All except the last sentence is new text*

[Note 4-7-2021: The second sentence has been reorganized and new text appears in italicized purple font.]

2.1.1 Tenured Appointment

Although the word "tenure" does not appear in the Code of Virginia, the University grants "election without term.".... Faculty on instructional tenured appointments normally hold the rank of Associate Professor without Term or Professor without Term (Section 2.2). *[Note: slight change in rank-title. See below for slight change in term faculty rank-title.]*

There is no specified time of service in the rank of associate professor without term. A request for consideration for promotion from associate professor without term to professor without term may be made by the faculty member at any time.

[Note: this statement is new. It has been noted many times that such a statement is desirable.]

[Note: no other changes to Sec. 2.1.1]

2.1.2 Tenure-Track Appointment

This is an instructional faculty appointment for a fixed term which allows faculty the opportunity to meet the requirements for tenure.... Faculty on tenure-track appointments may hold the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor.

A decision on tenure may be made in any year that the candidate is appointed to the tenure-track unless a specific time is required by the appointment contract. Faculty in their sixth year on the tenure-track at George Mason University must stand for tenure at that time if they wish to retain their position beyond the seventh year. Earlier consideration for a tenured appointment is possible under certain conditions. For example, experienced faculty hired on tenure-track appointments from other institutions will not normally be expected to serve a six-year tenure-track period, although there is no requirement that they stand for tenure prior to their sixth year of tenure-track service at George Mason University. Exceptionally, faculty may apply for early consideration based on unusually strong performance at George Mason University. An unsuccessful tenure decision prior to the final year on the tenure-track does not reduce the tenure-track period.

[Note: This paragraph is a consolidation of language from this section and Sec. 2.7.3. "At GMU" and "must" are added to this section.]

Tenure-track faculty cannot move to a term position, either as a direct appointment or as a result of a search, without prior approval of the Provost. (See Section 2.3.2.) This procedure will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

[Note: The paragraph above was moved from Sec. 2.3.3 as it pertains to tenure-track appointment and belongs here.]

2.1.3 Term Appointment

[Note: Some language in this section was adjusted to parallel Secs. 2.1.1/2.1.2 (Tenured/Tenure-track Appointments).]

Full-time faculty on fixed-term, non-tenure-track appointments are known as term faculty. Faculty whose assignments focus primarily on teaching are appointed as instructional faculty. Faculty whose assignments focus primarily on research are appointed as research faculty. Faculty whose assignments focus primarily on clinical practice are appointed as clinical faculty. While term faculty may identify with a primary focus, their assignments may include a blend of teaching, research, service, clinical practice, administrative program development and leadership, or instructional responsibilities that go beyond the boundaries of their primary focus. The faculty member's specific responsibilities will be stipulated in the appointment contract or assignment letter.

Instructional term faculty with the terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Instructional Assistant Professor, Instructional Associate Professor, or Instructional Professor. Research-oriented term faculty may hold one of the following ranks: Research Instructor, Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, or Research Professor. Clinical-oriented term faculty may hold one of the following ranks: Clinical Instructor, Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, or Clinical Professor.

[Note: The word "Term" is no longer used in instructional term appointments rank-titles. The replacement "Instructional" is parallel to the existing "Research" and "Clinical", all of which describe the focus of the primary assignment.]

Instructional term faculty without the terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Instructor, Senior Instructor, Master Instructor; or Professor of Practice.

Term faculty on single-year appointments whose permanent employment is with another organization hold title with the prefix "Visiting."

Term faculty appointment contracts are issued for a single-year or for multiple years, up to a maximum of 5 years. For initial appointments, the maximum contract length for assistant professors is three years and for associate and full professors it is five years. If a multi-year appointment is offered to a faculty member whose position relies entirely or partially on non-state appropriated funding, then a multi-year contract may be established subject to the continuing availability of funding throughout the contract period. Faculty on multi-year

contracts normally hold a terminal degree, as defined by standards in the discipline. Exceptions to either contract length or terminal degree requirements must be approved by the Provost. *[Note: The BOV limits the contracts to 5 years.]*

Contracts automatically expire at the end of the contract period, and although a faculty member may be reappointed, there is no guarantee or right to reappointment from one contract to the next, whether single-year or multi-year. Both the university and the faculty member retain the option to request a change from a multi-year contract to a single-year contract. This action must be approved by the respective Dean and the Provost. *[Note: Above two paragraphs were moved from Sec. 2.3.3 with some slight reorganization.]*

With the prior approval of the Provost, term faculty with the terminal degree may be considered for a tenure-track or tenured appointment as a result of a search (Section 2.3.2.1) or, rarely, by a direct appointment (Section 2.3.2.2). Service on a term appointment, whether or not externally-funded, may be applied to tenure consideration only if specified in the initial tenure-track letter of appointment.

[Note: Paragraph rewritten and consolidated from Secs. 2.1.3 and 2.3.3.]

[Note: Other language originally in this section has been moved to later, more relevant sections.]

Term faculty are eligible to be considered for promotion in rank, normally after five years of service.

[Note: Moved from 2.3.3.2]

2.1.4 Part-Time Appointment

Term faculty who are appointed to less than full-time positions are called part-time term faculty. Their assignments may include research, service, clinical practice, administrative program development, or instructional responsibilities that go beyond the boundaries of specific courses. Part-time term faculty positions are governed by the same appointment, rank, and title requirements as full-time term faculty positions. The Dean Provost is the final approval level for part-time faculty appointments, ~~and the maximum length of a part-time term faculty position is one year. Exceptions require the approval of the Provost.~~ Part-time faculty are not voting members of the General Faculty.

[Note: The final approval level was changed from the Dean to the Provost. Part-time term appointments are not limited to one year, as formerly stated.]

2.1.5-2.1.8 *[No changes to these sections.]*

~~2.1.9 Faculty with Governance Responsibilities~~

~~Faculty possess governance responsibilities in local academic units in which they hold primary affiliation and in the larger units of which their local academic units are a part. Local academic units and collegiate units may also choose to extend voting rights to other faculty who are employed in those units. For purposes of participation in governance beyond the local and collegiate levels, the General Faculty is defined in Section 1.3.1. [Note: this section's content is distributed in Sections 1.3.3 Colleges and Schools and 1.3.6 LAU's and Primary Affiliation.]~~

2.2 Description of Faculty Ranks

Faculty are either appointed or are promoted to an academic faculty rank. Appointments should be made at the appropriate rank and account for years of professional, teaching, or other experience as judged by the appointing local academic unit and subject to the approval of the Dean and Provost. Faculty are promoted in rank according to the procedures in Section 2.7.

[Note: this paragraph is new text.]

2.2.1 Instructor and Professor of Practice

Term faculty without the terminal degree in the field are appointed as Instructor or Professor of Practice. An instructor holds the master's degree or equivalent academic and/or professional qualifications and gives promise for making contributions in the area of their primary assignment focus. An instructor may be appointed or promoted in rank by meeting local academic unit criteria for the rank. Professors of Practice are faculty who possess the expertise, achievements and experience to provide professional instruction in a manner that brings relevance and distinction to the local academic unit and the University.

[Note: Language regarding term instructors is expanded, and the description of term Professors of Practice is included.]

[Note: The brief descriptions below are written generally to apply to both term and tenure-line professors. Language has been updated.]

2.2.2 Assistant Professor

An assistant professor normally holds the terminal degree in the discipline or field and gives promise for making significant contributions to teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and/or clinical work.

2.2.3 Associate Professor

A faculty member must meet the University's established criteria for advancement to the rank of associate professor as specified in Section 2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure and in Section 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty. New faculty who are appointed to the rank of associate professor must have demonstrated equivalent qualifications that meet local academic unit and Faculty Handbook criteria for the rank.

2.2.4 Professor

A faculty member must meet the University's established criteria for advancement to the rank of professor as specified in Section 2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure and in Section 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty. New faculty who are appointed to the rank of professor must have demonstrated equivalent qualifications that meet local academic unit and Faculty Handbook criteria for the rank.

2.2.5 University Professor

2.2.6 Distinguished Service Professor

2.2.7 Emeritus Faculty

2.2.8 Administrators Holding Faculty Rank

[No changes to these sections.]

2.3 Recruitment and Appointment of Faculty

2.3.1 Policies on Recruitment and Appointment of Faculty

2.3.1.1 Favoritism in Personnel Decisions

[No changes to these sections.]

2.3.2 Procedures for Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty

[Note: this section is common to all faculty. No changes to the first two paragraphs. The last two paragraphs have been rewritten with substantially the same content.]

....

All full-time faculty receive letters of appointment that must include the type and rank of faculty appointment (Sections 2.1-2.2); the terms of employment; and the start and end dates of the appointment (unless the appointment is without term). If a faculty appointment includes administrative or leadership assignments, these should be specified in the appointment letter. Also included is the statement that such employment is governed by the administrative policies and regulations of the University (currently in force and as amended in the future).

Appointment letter templates are located on the Provost's website. Acceptance in writing of this letter constitutes a contract between the University and the individual faculty member.

2.3.2.1 Competitive Appointments

2.3.2.2 Non-competitive Appointments

2.3.2.3 Awarding of Tenure at the Time of Appointment

[No changes to these sections]

~~2.3.3 Criteria and Procedures for Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion of Term Faculty~~

[Note: All content in section 2.3.3 has been distributed to other sections and this section title is deleted.]

[Notes: The Reappointment definition is moved to a new subsection within 2.7. The remainder of section 2.3.3.1 Reappointment is moved to 2.7.1. Section 2.3.3.2 Promotion is moved to a new section 2.7.3.1 Procedures for Promotion of Term Faculty.]

2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty

[Note: The section title is changed to include term faculty.]

[Note: there are two categories of criteria in this section: criteria for evaluating teaching/scholarship/service as described in the subsections and criteria for achieving a specific change in status in the paragraphs below. Language explicitly says that criteria are developed by the local academic unit and approved by the Provost.]

[Note: the original 2nd paragraph in this section has been moved to Section 2.7 Procedures for Reappointment, Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure.]

Recommendations on changes of faculty status are in large measure a faculty responsibility. The faculty's role in these personnel actions is based upon the essentiality of its judgment to sound educational policy, and upon the fact that scholars in a particular field have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues. An additional reason for the faculty's role in these matters is the general competence of experienced faculty personnel committees with a broader charge that encompasses the evaluation of teaching and service. Implicit in such competence is the acknowledgment that responsibility exists for both adverse and favorable judgments.

Faculty are evaluated when they are candidates for a change in faculty status: reappointment, renewal, promotion, or conferral of tenure (Section 2.7). Candidates will be evaluated in light of the missions of the University which are teaching; research and scholarship, both theoretical and applied; and service (as defined in Sections 2.4.1-2.4.3). Only these criteria, as further developed and published by the local academic unit, and approved by the Provost, may be used in evaluations of faculty. Peer review plays a central role in the evaluation of individual achievement in each of these areas. The primary consideration in the evaluation of faculty achievements will be the extent to which these continue to improve the academic quality of the University.

Faculty are not expected to have equal commitment or equal responsibilities in each of these areas. Levels of expectation will vary with the type of decision.

Initial tenure-track and term appointments will, to some extent, recognize perceived potential rather than achievement. Reappointment, renewal, appointment without term or promotion in rank will be based on achievement rather than potential.

Term faculty candidates for promotion to associate professor or to senior instructor must demonstrate at least high competence in the primary area (instructional, research, or clinical). They must also show evidence of service. The standards that must be met in the primary area and in service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

Term faculty candidates for promotion to professor or to master instructor must demonstrate genuine excellence in the primary area (instructional, research, or clinical). They must also show evidence of continuing service. The standards that must be met in the primary area and in service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

Tenure-track candidates for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor without term must exhibit genuine excellence either in teaching or in research/scholarship. High competence must be exhibited in both areas. Furthermore, candidates must provide evidence that their contributions in their area(s) of genuine excellence have had some significant impact beyond the boundaries of this University. If the primary strength is teaching, there should be evidence that the candidate's contributions have influence beyond the immediate classroom; if in research/scholarship, there should be evidence that the candidate's contributions have significant influence on colleagues at other institutions in this country, and where applicable, abroad. They must also show evidence of service. The standards that must be met in teaching, research/scholarship, and service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost. Appointment without term should leave no doubt about the candidate's value to the University over an extended period. ***[Note: Service (as broadly defined in Sec. 2.4.3) and standards are now explicitly included in the description of tenure-track promotion criteria.]***

Tenured candidates seeking promotion to the rank of professor without term must maintain high competence in teaching, research/scholarship, and service while also maintaining genuine excellence in teaching or research/scholarship. In addition, evidence of significant impact beyond the boundaries of the University must be much more substantial than in cases involving tenure or promotion to the rank of associate professor without term. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of an established external reputation in the primary field, based on consequential achievements in teaching, research and scholarship, or professional activities directly related to teaching and research and scholarship. The standards that must be met in teaching, research/scholarship, and service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

All evaluations should consider the candidate's adherence to professional ethics (see Section 2.10.2).

2.4.1 Teaching

Effective teaching is demonstrated through a combination of course and curricular materials, learning outcomes, assignments, and assessments designed to promote student learning; through review of those materials, outcomes, assignments, and assessments by knowledgeable peers and colleagues; through student evaluations of their learning experiences; and through engaging in professional/teaching development activities. ***[Note: this paragraph has been rewritten.]***

[Note: Examples of teaching activities are now included.]

Examples of contributions to teaching include:

- Development and implementation of new courses, curricula, and programs (face-to-face, online, or hybrid)
- Use of research-based, innovative, inclusive, and/or high-impact teaching and assessment practices
- Development of instructional materials, including appropriate use of emerging and digital technologies
- Training and supervision of teaching (graduate) and/or learning (undergraduate) assistants
- Course coordination for courses with multiple sections
- Mentoring students, both undergraduate and graduate
- Clinical and field supervision of students
- Student academic advising
- Mentoring faculty colleagues
- Participating in educational development activities to strengthen knowledge, skills, and/or abilities

2.4.2 Research and Scholarship

Scholarly achievement is demonstrated by original contributions to the advancement of the discipline/field of study, or to the integration of the discipline with other fields, or by the application of discipline- or field-based knowledge to the practice of a profession. *[Note: this paragraph has been slightly rewritten.]*

[Note: Examples of research/scholarship activities are now included.]

Examples of evidence for research and scholarship include:

- Publications (peer and non-peer reviewed), including journal articles, books, book chapters, monographs, etc.
- Sponsored research activity and grant and contract awards.
- Conference and other scholarly presentations (peer-reviewed and invited).
- Original artistic work, software and media, exhibitions, and professional performances.
- Intellectual property, patents, and evidence of relevant entrepreneurial activities.
- Other evidence indicating scholarly recognition and reputation.

2.4.3 ~~University and Professional~~ Service

[Note: The section is retitled to simply “Service”, which now includes Leadership.]

Service, which may include leadership responsibilities, is demonstrated by faculty participation in governance, and operational or development activities in the local academic unit, the University, or the profession. Required service in the local academic unit includes, but is not limited to, such activity as attendance at faculty meetings and participation in faculty personnel matters and curriculum development. Other examples of service to the LAU include student advising, developing or supporting co-curricular experiences for students, and mentoring colleagues.

Professional service is demonstrated by contributions to recognized societies and associations that promote research and scholarship and by consultancies and cooperative projects that make the faculty member's discipline or field-based knowledge and skills available to individuals, groups or agencies outside the University.

Leadership is demonstrated by making significant and consequential contributions to the local academic unit, the University, professional societies and associations, and local/regional/national/international communities. Examples include, but are not limited to, chairing or co-chairing committees for the local academic unit; leading and/or actively contributing to university-wide initiatives; serving in leadership roles for professional societies and organizations; serving in significant editorial roles; leading invited or peer-reviewed workshops; leading community-based activities related in some way to expertise; and mentoring faculty colleagues in formal programs.

Each local academic unit must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for institutional and professional leadership and engagement.

2.4.4. Administrative Responsibilities

[Note: this is a new section that takes into account the contributions from faculty with significant administrative responsibilities.]

Many faculty assume administrative responsibilities as part of their terms of employment. Evaluation of faculty performance of these responsibilities must be included in the annual review and any consideration of change of faculty status. The criteria for successful performance must be given to the faculty member in writing.

2.5 Procedures for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty

[Note: Term faculty are now included. Changes include replacing “candidate” with “faculty” in order that these procedures apply broadly to faculty other than those undergoing evaluation for promotion.]

2.5.1 Teaching

Local academic units must regularly evaluate the teaching effectiveness of their faculty. In doing so, they are expected to incorporate data from both peers and students....

[Note: no further changes in this section.]

2.5.2 Research and Scholarship

The systematic evaluation of a faculty’s theoretical or applied research, scholarship, and creative work begins in the local academic unit with an independent peer review of the faculty’s work. For cases of tenure or promotion of tenured faculty, the LAU will also seek and give consideration to external evaluations from qualified referees who are not associated with the University. For cases of promotion of term faculty, the LAU may choose to consider external evaluations of the faculty member’s work. Each local academic unit will develop its own specific guidelines with respect to the selection and use of external referees within the institutional guidance provided on the Provost’s website. These guidelines must be fair to all parties concerned and be publicized among the faculty in a timely manner. ~~The local unit administrator has a specific responsibility to review annually the research and scholarly activities of tenure-track faculty and to discuss both the strengths and weaknesses with them on an individual basis.~~

[Note: LAU’s may choose to use external referees for term faculty evaluation. The last sentence is moved to Sec. 2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty.]

2.5.3 ~~University and Professional~~ Service

The evaluation of university service is based on a peer review of the faculty’s contributions through engagement and leadership to the life and governance of the local academic unit and the larger organizational units of which it is a part. Procedures for the evaluation of external professional service and leadership are similar to those employed in the evaluation of research and scholarship.

[Note: the title of this section is changed to “Service” from “University and Professional Service” and now includes Leadership.]

2.6 Annual Evaluations of Faculty and Administrators

2.6.1 Annual Review of Faculty

All faculty are evaluated annually in their local academic units (LAU). The evaluation is based upon the contributions of the preceding academic year and, where applicable, the following summer. Normally, evaluations are completed by the LAU during the Fall semester.

... *[No changes to this paragraph.]*

The criteria for the annual faculty review are the same as those listed in Section 2.4. Faculty are evaluated on the quality of their performance over the entire scope of their contributions during the year and in the context of their goals, assignments, and other responsibilities. Performance expectations should recognize differences in faculty assignments within the same LAU. The local unit administrator has a specific responsibility to review annually the research and scholarly activities of tenure-track faculty and to discuss both the strengths and weaknesses with them on an individual basis. The local unit administrator also has the specific responsibility to advise term faculty individually regarding their progress toward achieving reappointment or promotion. *[Note: Addition of “specific responsibilities to the local academic unit administrator” for term faculty. The responsibility for tenure-track faculty was moved from 2.5.2 Research and Scholarship.]*

[No further changes in this section]

2.6.2 Post Tenure Review Policies and Procedures

2.6.3 Faculty Role in the Evaluation of Academic Administrators

[No changes to these sections.]

2.7 Procedures for Reappointment, Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure

[Note: This section is retitled to include “Reappointment”. Text from the original 2.7.1 (General Procedures, 2nd paragraph below) was moved here. Sec. 2.7.1 was retitled “Procedures for Reappointment”.]

Recommendations in these matters originate through faculty action in accordance with established procedures; are reviewed by senior academic administrators; and presented to the Board of Visitors. The administration should overturn faculty personnel recommendations rarely, and only when it is clear that peer faculty have not applied appropriate standards, or when the University's long-term programmatic needs are an overriding consideration. Only in extraordinary circumstances and for clearly stated reasons should administrators substitute their own judgment of the value of scholarly or educational accomplishments for judgments made by faculty.

[Note: The paragraph above was moved with no change from Section 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty, since it seems more relevant to procedures rather than evaluation criteria.]

Reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure recommendations are based upon an evaluation of performance over the faculty member’s total period of service at George Mason University (Sections 2.4 and 2.5). Scholarly achievements prior to joining the George Mason University faculty weigh less heavily in these evaluations, but are also considered. These evaluations differ from the annual review (Section 2.6.1) in their emphasis on lasting contributions, consistency of performance, and flexibility.

The terms “reappoint” or “reappointment” in this Handbook mean offering a term faculty member a contract for an additional term, which may include the same or different duties and responsibilities.

“Renew” or “renewal” in this Handbook means offering a tenure-track faculty member a contract for an additional term on the tenure track, which may include the same or different duties and responsibilities.

Faculty member duties and responsibilities that will be evaluated must be included in the appointment contract. If subsequent contracts or assignment letters are issued, the duties and responsibilities may be changed in consultation with the faculty member. [Note: New text.]

All faculty who are candidates for a change in appointment status are evaluated by faculty in the local academic unit. The processes and procedures by which they are evaluated are established by the bylaws or standing rules of the LAU and must be consistent with the procedures in this Handbook. [Note: New text.]

Local academic unit bylaws or standing rules may provide for faculty to participate in evaluation committee meetings electronically, provided the technology used allows all members to hear each other simultaneously. For all voting that pertains to changes in appointment status, provision must be made for anonymous submission by a written or secure electronic ballot. [Note: New text here. This also appears in Sec. 2.7.3.2, where there are no changes. The provision for electronic meetings pertains to all personnel committees.]

A faculty member may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom he or she has, or has had, a family or close personal relationship or other conflict of interest (see Section 2.3.1.1).

2.7.1 Procedures for Reappointment

[Note: Moved from Section 2.3.3.1 with some rearrangement.]

Term faculty on a single-year contract will be evaluated annually for reappointment by either the local unit administrator or a local academic unit faculty committee. Term faculty who are being considered for reappointment to a multi-year contract will be evaluated by a local academic unit faculty committee. Evaluation of a faculty member on a multi-year contract occurs during the final year of the contract appointment. Both the method of evaluating faculty on single-year contracts, and the composition and procedures for the faculty evaluation committee, which must include term faculty, are to be specified in the LAU bylaws or standing rules.

Assistant professors may receive a one, two or three-year reappointment. After three single-year appointments, term faculty who meet satisfactory annual performance standards will normally be recommended for a multi-year appointment. Continuing to issue one-year contracts for a faculty member over many years is discouraged. Associate and full professors may be reappointed to contracts of up to five years. *[Note: the BOV limits contracts to 5 years.]*

Term faculty on single-year appointments are evaluated according to the criteria in Section 2.4 and the procedures in Section 2.5. Criteria for reappointment will focus on demonstrated performance in those areas designated in the initial and any subsequent contract letters. The local academic unit recommendation is sent to the Dean. Based on that recommendation and programmatic needs, the Dean will make the decision to reappoint, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the initial contract, or usually no later than 5 months prior to the last day of the term of subsequent contracts.

Term faculty who are being recommended for multi-year reappointments are evaluated according to the criteria in Section 2.4 and the procedures in Section 2.5. Criteria for reappointment will focus on demonstrated performance in those areas designated in the initial and any subsequent contract letters. The local academic unit recommendation is sent to the Dean. Based on that recommendation and programmatic needs, the Dean will make a recommendation to the Provost whether to reappoint.

The Provost will make the final determination on multi-year appointments and notify term instructional faculty members, in writing, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the term of their initial contracts, and usually no later than 5 months prior to the last day of the term of subsequent contracts. The Provost will make the final determination and notify research and term clinical faculty members, in writing, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the term of their contracts. The President will make the final decision for reappointment to a contract longer than 3 years.

2.7.2 Procedures for Renewal

Faculty appointed to a tenure-track position receive an initial three-year term. (See Section 2.1.2.) Tenure-track faculty will be evaluated for renewal during the third year of their initial appointment using the following procedure:

1. Tenure-track faculty are evaluated by either the first-level or second-level promotion and tenure committee (see Section 2.7.3.2) according to the criteria in Section 2.4 and the procedures in Section 2.5.

[No further change to this Section.]

2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure

The processes for promotion of term and tenured faculty, and tenure for tenure-track faculty, are initiated by the local academic unit with the faculty member's concurrence. Self-nomination is also permitted. *[Note: the remaining language that appeared in this section was moved to new section 2.7.3.2.]*

2.7.3.1 Procedures for Promotion of Term Faculty

[Note: this is a new subsection specifically for term faculty promotion. This language was moved from Sec. 2.3.3.2. There is some proposed new wording.]

A term faculty member may be considered for promotion, normally after five years of service in the current rank. Term faculty who meet the LAU criteria for promotion may be considered early; however, typical candidates for promotion have a minimum of three years teaching at George Mason University. Promotion may occur within the period of a multi-year contract. Upon promotion, a new contract of up to five years will be issued.

Term faculty members will be considered for promotion by a local academic unit committee according to the criteria for evaluation in Section 2.4 and the procedures for evaluation in Section 2.5. Members of the committee are those faculty who are eligible to vote on promotion of term faculty, normally tenured and term faculty above the rank of assistant professor. Term faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on the evaluation committee if there is an insufficient number of eligible or qualified term faculty in the local academic unit. Colleges and schools may elect to include a second level review. The composition of the promotion committee and the procedures used are to be specified in the LAU bylaws or standing rules.

The recommendation for promotion is sent from the committee to the Dean. The Dean's recommendation for promotion is due to the Provost by November 1st. By the end of fall semester (no later than December 15th), the Provost will notify the faculty member, in writing, of a decision with accompanying justification, whether or not to recommend promotion.

Term faculty who are promoted will be announced to the Board of Visitors.

Term faculty who are denied promotion are eligible to be considered for promotion in subsequent promotion cycles.

2.7.3.2 Procedures for Promotion and Tenure of Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty

[Note: this is a newly renumbered subsection (originally 2.7.3) specifically for tenured and tenure-track faculty promotion.]

~~A decision on tenure may be made in any year that the candidate is appointed to the tenure track unless a specific time is required by the appointment contract. A candidate must be considered no later than the final year of appointment to the tenure track. An unsuccessful tenure decision prior to the final year on the tenure track does not reduce the tenure track period.~~ *[Note: This paragraph is moved to Sec. 2.1.2, Tenure-track Appointment.]*

[No further changes to this section.]

2.7.4 Tenure-Track Contract Extension

[No changes to this section.]

2.8 Appeal of Negative Decisions in Renewal, Tenure and Promotion Cases.

2.9 Policies and Procedures Relating to Termination

2.10 Faculty Duties and Responsibilities

2.11 Faculty Rights and Privileges

[No changes to these sections.]

2.12 Department Chairs

2.12.3 Procedures for Appointment and Renewal

2.12.3.1 Search Procedures

Search procedures are initiated after the incumbent chair has declined to seek reappointment, or after the Provost has notified the incumbent chair that he/she will not be reappointed, or when the position is vacant. A search committee is constituted no later than December 10th. This committee consists of five faculty, all of whom ~~must be tenured or tenure track and will~~ have held a full-time instructional appointment for at least one year: (i) a chair, appointed by the Dean, from among the faculty of the college/school but not of the department; (ii) two faculty, ~~of whom one may be on tenure track appointment,~~ appointed by the Dean from among the faculty of the department; and (iii) two faculty, ~~of whom one may be on tenure-track appointment,~~ elected from among and by the faculty of the department ~~from among its own ranks~~. The department elects its members of the committee after the appointments by the Dean have been made known. The four department faculty members must include at least one representative from each of the faculty groups (tenured, tenure-track, instructional term) who have appointments in the department. If the qualifications for faculty membership cannot be met, the Dean will consult with the department faculty before ~~will~~ appointing another ~~appropriate~~ faculty member. *[Note: no further changes to this section.]*

2.12.4 Removal

The faculty of a department, under extraordinary circumstances, may petition the Dean to remove a chair who no longer enjoys the trust and confidence of the faculty. A petition of this type will be conveyed to the Dean only if supported by at least ~~three-fourths~~ two-thirds of the ~~tenure-track and tenured~~ full-time instructional faculty of the department. Upon receipt of such a petition, the Dean, after having inquired into the circumstances which have resulted in the petition, will make a recommendation to the Provost whether or not the removal of the chair is in the best interests of the department and/or the University. The Provost will make the final determination.

The Provost, under extraordinary circumstances, and in consultation with the Dean and the faculty, may remove a chair who is failing to perform at an acceptable level, even when the chair is covered by a multi-year contract. The Provost will give the chair at least thirty days notice.

2.13 Directors of Academic Programs Spanning More Than a Single Academic Unit

[No changes to this section.]

Chapter III FACULTY COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

[Note: The Provost's office no longer administers the Study leave programs.]

[Note: Term faculty on a multi-year contract are now eligible for Instructional Faculty Study Leave.]

3.6.1 Study Leave for Tenure-Track Faculty

All tenure-track assistant and associate professors will be granted a release from teaching responsibilities in the form of a one-semester study leave at some point during the first five years of their tenure-track appointment. The leave is at full pay and benefits. This leave is designed to assist a tenure-track faculty member in advancing his or her research, scholarly, or creative activities. The timing of this leave will be subject to approval by both the respective local academic unit head and the appropriate Dean. ~~The Office of the Provost will provide one-course matrix replacement funding per granted leave request. This leave policy is not intended to conflict with an existing local academic unit practice; rather than reducing a local academic unit's flexibility, its intent is to enhance and supplement existing practices. During the semester either prior to or succeeding the faculty member's leave, the local academic unit may need to ask the recipient to teach one additional course in order to accommodate this leave. Full details and application procedures are available from the Provost Office's web site~~

(<http://provost.gmu.edu/>). The timing of a leave may be delayed if in the judgment of the LAU administrator, the faculty member's services are needed for a particular semester.

Colleges and schools will notify the Provost of those faculty who have been approved for a study leave. A faculty member who receives a tenure-track study leave must agree to remain a full-time employee of the University for at least one academic year after the conclusion of the leave.

3.6.2 Leave Programs for ~~Tenured~~ Instructional Faculty

~~There are two leave programs for tenured faculty. One is administered by the Provost's Office. The other is administered at the local academic unit level.~~ The purpose of ~~these~~ this leave programs is to support professional development initiatives designed to advance scholarly research, teaching, and/or creative activity, including the development of innovative teaching approaches and methods. Leaves are for one semester at full pay and full benefits or an academic year at half pay with full benefits (based on 50% of ~~their~~ base salary). ~~Full details and application procedures for each of these programs are available on the Provost Office's web site (<http://provost.gmu.edu/>).~~

~~Eligibility for the Provost Office Study Leave Program for Tenured Instructional Faculty:~~

~~Faculty must be tenured or on a term multi-year contract, with six years of service at Mason, and have completed six years of such service since a previous study leave. This six-year period includes time spent on leave of absence, unless such leave includes time worked at another agency or institution, in which case an exception must be approved and granted by the Vice President for Research.~~

Colleges and schools establish the procedures, criteria and deadlines for submission and review of leave proposals. The timing of a leave may be delayed if in the judgment of the LAU administrator, the faculty member's services are needed for a particular semester. Colleges and schools will notify the Provost of those faculty who have been approved for a study leave.

A faculty member who receives a study leave must agree to remain a full-time employee of the University for at least one academic year after the conclusion of the leave.

A faculty member who accepts a study leave must agree to serve as a reviewer of future applications at least once.

~~Eligibility for LAU Professional Development Leaves:~~

~~Faculty must be tenured, with six years of service at Mason, and have completed six years of service since a previous study leave. This six-year period includes time spent on leave of absence, unless such leave includes time worked at another agency or institution, in which case an exception must be approved and granted by the Vice President for Research.~~

~~A faculty member who receives a professional development leave must agree to remain a full-time employee of the University for at least one academic year after the conclusion of the leave.~~

~~Local academic units are responsible for establishing the procedures, criteria and deadlines for submission and review of leave proposals. Local academic units are also responsible for obtaining approval of leave proposals by their Dean and the Provost. The timing of a leave may be delayed if in the judgment of the LAU administrator, the faculty member's services are needed for a particular semester.~~