



McCausland College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

POLICY: Appointment, Review, and Promotion of FTE Professional-Track Faculty

DATE: August 16, 2026 (Revised)

I. POLICY

This policy provides the college-level framework for the appointment, annual review, and promotion of FTE professional-track faculty in the McCausland College of Arts and Sciences (MCAS). The professional-track designation is for faculty members engaged in research, instruction, service, mentoring, and/or administration, but who are not eligible for tenure. ***This policy does not apply to faculty in Research Grant or Time-Limited positions.***

This policy applies to all MCAS units who do not have unit-level University approved Professional-Track Faculty Criteria. This college policy is subordinate to related policies outlined in the [University of South Carolina Faculty Manual](#) and in the [University Policy and Procedures Manual](#). In cases of inconsistency between this college policy and university, state, or federal policies, the university, state, or federal policies are the final authority.

II. POSITION APPROVAL AND APPOINTMENT

A. Position Approval

New or replacement FTE professional-track faculty positions, including the conversion of non-FTE positions to FTE positions, must have approval by the Dean's Office prior to initiating the hiring and search process.

Professional-track faculty positions include all positions defined and listed in [University Policy ACAF 1.16 Professional-Track Faculty](#).

B. Hiring and Search Process

The hiring process for FTE professional-track faculty follows the same policies and procedures as those for FTE tenure-track faculty, as outlined in [University Policy ACAF 1.00 Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-track, and Professional-Track Faculty](#).

C. Credential Verification

All university faculty and other academic personnel involved in instruction must meet the SACSCOC credential requirements for teaching at the appropriate level or have approved alternate credentials as outlined in [University Policy ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructors of Record](#).

D. Academic Position Appointment

1. Academic appointment to a professional-track faculty position is made by the College. Each professional-track faculty member will receive a letter of appointment from the Dean specifying the beginning and end dates of the appointment, along with the unit assignment.

The academic appointment letter follows a specific format that conforms to College and University policies. Each letter defines the base teaching load, research and service expectations, start and end dates, and includes the statement that “This position may be renewable at the discretion of the Dean and is subject to satisfactory annual performance evaluations, programmatic need, and continued availability of funding.”

The base teaching load in the College is a 4:4 course load for Instructional and Teaching Faculty. With the approval of the College, units may assign instructional duties that qualify as course equivalencies, e.g., lab coordination, management of high-enrollment multi-section courses, or direction of internship programs.

Service, mentoring, and research expectations may vary by unit or position. Units must address expectations for service, mentoring, and research (as appropriate) in their unit-level promotion criteria and review standards.

2. Professional-track faculty may serve in administrative appointments or conduct activities that temporarily change their base appointment. The terms of any administrative appointment must be approved by the Dean’s Office and will be outlined in a separate letter of appointment. Administrative appointments are contingent on maintaining an academic appointment.
3. Appointment Length
 - a. Appointment lengths align with university and unit-level promotion criteria and review policies.
 - Faculty are generally hired on annual appointments for the first three years.
 - Upon a successful third-year review, faculty will be reappointed for a 3-year term.
 - Faculty may be reappointed for a 5-year term thereafter, subject to the unit head’s recommendation and Dean approval.
 - b. All appointments are at the discretion of the Dean and, regardless of the appointment term, are subject to successful annual performance reviews, programmatic need, and availability of funding.

III. REVIEW AND REAPPOINTMENT

A. Performance Review

An annual review of all professional-track faculty is required ([University Policy ACAF 1.16 Professional-Track Faculty](#)). The unit head is responsible for ensuring that all professional-track faculty members are reviewed annually in writing. The review is conducted as specified in unit policies. In cases where professional-track faculty hold joint appointments, the secondary unit must also be involved in the review per the [Faculty Manual](#). The annual review is submitted to the unit head. When there is a conflict of interest, the Associate Dean will serve in this role.

B. Reappointment

Reappointment is based on unit review, programmatic need, and availability of funds. Following a successful annual evaluation, unit reappointment requests are submitted to the appropriate Associate Dean.

For conversion to or renewal of a multi-year appointment, the unit head submits the following items to the Dean's Office for review and approval following the academic calendar set by the College and University:

1. One-page justification focusing on the professional-track faculty member's teaching, service, mentorship, and/or research effectiveness as appropriate for the appointment.
2. The professional-track faculty member's curriculum vitae.
3. Faculty and student teaching evaluations of the professional-track faculty member since last reappointment, if applicable, and summarized in the [Provost's Teaching Table](#).
4. Evaluation and description of administrative duties, if applicable.

Once approved, the formal letter of reappointment will be sent directly to the professional-track faculty member by the Office of the Dean.

C. Non-Reappointment and Termination

Appointments of professional-track faculty shall be in writing and shall specify the beginning and ending dates of appointment. Appointments shall terminate on the date specified. Professional-track faculty with multi-year contracts must be given notice of non-reappointment at least 180 days before the end of the contract. Consult the [Faculty Manual](#) for information regarding the circumstances under which employment may be terminated before the end of the contract period.

D. Change of Status

Changes of status to and from tenure-track faculty tracks are governed by the Faculty

Manual and policy [ACAF 1.18 Change of Status Between Tenure Track and Professional Track](#).

Requests and processes for Professional-Track Faculty Title-Series Transfer (e.g., from Instructor to Teaching Assistant Professor) are governed by the Provost's Office ([Professional-Track Faculty Title-Series Transfer Requests](#)).

IV. PROMOTION

A. Unit Criteria

Promotion is not earned simply by years in rank, nor is it an automatic process. Promotion is granted to individuals in recognition of their achievements in teaching, service, mentoring, and research, subject to the terms of appointment.

Review and promotion criteria are developed by individual College units and are based on position duties as outlined in faculty offer letters (i.e., the balance of teaching, service, mentoring, research, and/or administrative duties). All criteria must be approved by the College, Provost, and University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty prior to implementation per University policies and the [Faculty Manual](#). When new unit criteria are approved, professional-track faculty have a two-year period from the effective date of approval during which they may apply for promotion under either criterion. After these two years, all faculty must apply under the most recently approved criteria.

B. Promotion Eligibility

Each year, the Office of the Dean will notify all unit heads of the opportunity for professional-track faculty to submit their files for promotion. Written notification will include the promotion review calendar.

Promotion eligibility is governed by approved unit criteria, the [Faculty Manual](#), and [University Policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions](#).

C. Promotion File Preparation and Submission

Each professional-track faculty member pursuing promotion must submit a promotion file following the [Candidate File Preparation Guide](#) on the Provost's Office website by the date indicated by the Office of the Dean's schedule for promotion of professional-track faculty.

Promotion files are submitted to the unit head or Professional-Track Faculty Committee per the unit's approved criteria.

D. Promotion File Review

Promotion files will be reviewed according to unit-level criteria. If the unit-level criteria is pending University approval, see **Appendix A**.

E. Dean/Provost Decision

1. The Dean will review each professional-track faculty promotion file and render a recommendation to the Provost in writing.
2. The Provost will review the recommendation and notify the College of approval or disapproval.
3. The Dean will notify the faculty member of the final decision. If approved, the notification letter will include the effective date of the promotion in concurrence with the renewal of their appointment.

F. Negative Decisions

Per the [Faculty Manual](#), upon a candidate's written request for a negative promotion decision by the unit, the unit shall send that candidate's file through all appropriate channels for endorsement to the provost for appropriate action. Failure to recommend a candidate favorably for promotion is without prejudice with respect to future consideration. After the provost's decision, candidates dissatisfied with the promotion decision may submit an appeal to the University Faculty Appellate Panel.

V. VOTING RIGHTS

Voting rights of full-time professional-track faculty members at the university level of governance are specified in the [Faculty Manual](#). Voting rights for professional-track faculty at the college/school level and in academic sub-units (e.g., departments) follow the university voting rights unless otherwise specified in the academic unit/sub-unit criteria, policies, or bylaws. These rights govern action on matters at the level of the college/school or sub-unit.

VI. RELATED UNIVERSITY POLICIES

[USC Columbia Faculty Manual](#)

[University Policy ACAF 1.00 Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Professional-Track Faculty](#)

[University Policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions](#)

[University Policy ACAF 1.16 Professional-Track Faculty](#)

[University Policy ACAF 1.18 Change of Status to and from Tenure-Track Faculty](#)

[University Policy ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructors of Record](#)



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APPENDIX A: Professional-Track Promotion File Review in the absence of unit level criteria.

If unit criteria are pending University approval, the following procedures govern professional-track faculty promotion review.

1. Each academic unit shall create a professional-track faculty committee and will determine and periodically review the constitution and charge of that unit's committee.
2. The Professional-Track review committee is elected from all tenure-track and professional-track faculty of higher rank than the candidate undergoing review. By April 15th of each year, the committee shall elect a Chair of the Committee and report the Chair's name to the Office of the Provost. This committee should include at least one professional-track faculty member above the present rank of the candidate(s) under review. If the unit does not have an appropriately ranked professional-track faculty member for this service, a suitable substitute from another unit may be asked to serve on the committee, in consultation with the unit's Associate Dean.

Standing unit tenure and promotion committees may be used in lieu of an independent review committee, provided that at least one professional-track faculty member above the present rank of the candidate(s) is added to the review and assessment of professional-track faculty member promotion files.

Joint appointments must include input from the secondary unit as specified in the unit criteria.

3. The faculty member assembles Primary and Secondary Files, using the template on the Provost's webpage, [Candidate File Preparation Guide](#).
4. The Unit Head or Review Committee Chair, as appropriate, will add the following materials to the file and then provide copies of the file to the promotion review committee:
 - a. Instructional
 - Peer reviews of teaching
 - Teaching summary with the [Provost's Teaching Table](#)
 - b. Clinical
 - Peer reviews of teaching and clinical supervision (if applicable)
 - Teaching summary with the [Provost's Teaching Table](#)
 - External review letters (if applicable)

- c. Research
 - Peer reviews of teaching (if applicable)
 - Teaching summary with the [Provost's Teaching Table](#)
 - External review letters
5. The Unit Head or Review Committee Chair, as appropriate, will provide copies of the complete file, including the review committee recommendation, if applicable, to the unit's voting faculty for review along with completed [Unit Promotion Ballots](#). See also Section IV. Voting Rights below.

The unit recommendation for promotion will be based *on a simple majority vote* by unit faculty.
6. In the cases where promotion is recommended, the Unit Head will add the Vote [Summary Form](#), the faculty ballots, and the Chair or Director's Letter to the file and then submit the complete dossier file to the Dean.