

Academic Promotion

Original Implementation: October 19, 1978

Last Revision: July 26, 2016

Academic promotion is awarded when a candidate successfully demonstrates meeting or exceeding performance standards in teaching, research/scholarly/creative accomplishments, and service as established by the academic unit.

Academic promotion will normally be restricted to full-time faculty members who have earned the highest academic degree customarily awarded in their field of study.

In exceptional circumstances, special training in recognized institutions, e.g., conservatories or research institutes, or the attainment of nationally recognized licenses or certificates, may be judged to satisfy the requirement for advanced degrees. Practical experience and/or demonstrable expertise and performance in activities related directly to one's faculty appointment may be judged to satisfy the requirement for advanced degrees and/or years of experience. Exceptions may be granted by the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

This policy establishes a system of procedures for promotion in all academic units of the university. Academic units are responsible for establishing rigorous standards for teaching, research/scholarly/creative accomplishments and service for use in decisions regarding promotion. Unit standards must be approved by the dean and by the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

I. General Provisions

A. Definitions:

1. "Promotion" means advancement based on a faculty member's academic credentials and meritorious performance in teaching, research/scholarly/creative accomplishments, and service.
2. "Academic unit" normally refers to a subdivision of a college, but can also refer to the library.
3. "Academic unit head" is the administrator immediately responsible for the academic unit.
4. "Promotion review portfolio" (referred to hereafter as the portfolio) is a set of verifiable materials demonstrating evidence of a candidate's credentials and suitability for promotion. The portfolio should contain a succinct, relevant, substantive and cumulative record of a candidate's performance during the review period at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA); for senior-level and administrative positions, the portfolio will consist of materials requested by the provost and vice president for academic affairs.
5. "Academic year" as used in this policy is the full nine-month period from

September through May.

6. “Rigorous standards” are a set of verifiable standards developed by tenured and tenure-track faculty in the academic unit and are subject to approval by the dean and provost and vice president for academic affairs. Standards for promotion may be distinct from standards for tenure.

B. Academic Rank

1. This policy applies to the ranks of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor (see policy 7.2).
2. The ranks of both librarian and archivist I, II, III, and IV are governed by policy 7.17.

II. Promotion Policy Principles

- A. Promotion is not an entitlement but must be earned by meeting or exceeding the standards appropriate to the rank.
- B. Recommendations and decisions on promotion will not discriminate on any basis prohibited by law or policy.
- C. Application processes for tenure and promotion can be undertaken at the same time.
- D. Promotion policies and guidelines in place at the time of hire will be used for evaluation and rating. If application for promotion occurs in year seven or beyond, policies in place at the time of application will be used for evaluation and rating.
- E. For purposes of calculating years of service in rank, an “academic year” will be the approximate nine-month period from September through May. If a faculty member begins service during an academic year, the period of service from the date of appointment until the beginning of the following academic year will not be counted toward years of service in rank, unless the inclusion of that period of service is approved by the provost and vice president for academic affairs.
 1. A scholarly leave of absence (see policy 12.11) will count as part of the service in rank unless the candidate and the provost and vice president for academic affairs agree in writing to an exception to this provision at the time the leave is granted.
 2. Periods during which a faculty member is on leave of absence for one semester or more due to health-related issues or military service (see policy 12.11) will not be counted as part of the service in rank unless the candidate and the provost and vice president for academic affairs agree in writing to an exception to this provision at the time the leave is granted.
- F. The portfolios of all candidates within a given academic unit should conform to the same criteria, although variation related to the nature of the candidate’s activity is expected.
- G. Review committees must consistently follow promotion procedures when evaluating all candidates within a college.
- H. Each critical area—teaching, research/scholarly/creative accomplishment, and service—must be evaluated and rated separately and will include criteria addressing collegiality. An overall promotion rating must also be provided.

- I. At a minimum, the rating system must include two levels—satisfactory/meets expectations and unsatisfactory/does not meet expectations.
- J. Each person in the review process has a professional responsibility to treat information that evaluates another's work as confidential unless otherwise required by law.
- K. Allegations of misconduct made against a candidate during the promotion review process will not be considered by the reviewers. Confirmed professional misconduct that occurred during the probationary period is a valid consideration.

III. Promotion Eligibility

- A. Tenure-track faculty members who are hired at the rank of instructor will normally be expected to complete a terminal degree within a period of time prescribed by the initial contract offer. Completion of the terminal degree within the prescribed period, along with a letter requesting promotion and official transcripts reflecting the degree earned, will serve as the basis for promotion to assistant professor. All materials must be submitted to the appropriate academic unit head and approved by the dean and provost and vice president for academic affairs. Failure to complete the terminal degree in the prescribed time frame will result in the issuance of a terminal contract for the following academic year.
- B. Candidates for associate professor will meet or exceed the standards established by the appropriate academic unit for teaching, research/scholarly/creative accomplishments, and service. Generally, application for associate professor occurs in the last probationary year of service, provided candidates have served a minimum of three years in rank as assistant professor. Exceptions must be approved by the dean and provost and vice president for academic affairs. The circumstances warranting early application must be exceptional. The promotion review portfolio will document all years in service at SFA at the rank of instructor and/or assistant professor.
- C. Candidates for professor will exceed established standards for teaching, demonstrate a regular and consistent record of research/scholarly/creative accomplishments, and document service at all appropriate levels while in rank as associate professor. To apply for the rank of professor, an individual should have held the rank of associate professor for at least five years at SFA. Exceptions must be approved by the dean and provost and vice president for academic affairs. The circumstances warranting early application must be exceptional. The promotion review portfolio will document all years in service at SFA at the rank of associate professor. The provost and vice president for academic affairs may waive requirements for an individual hired for a senior-level position.

IV. Promotion Procedures

- A. Each college and its academic units will establish a promotion review process that is approved by the dean and the provost and vice president for academic affairs.
 - 1. A copy of all college/academic unit promotion review policies must be retained in the offices of the provost and vice president for academic affairs and the

- general counsel.
2. The promotion review process must allow for review of faculty being considered for promotion by all full-time faculty members in the academic unit holding rank higher than the candidate, the academic unit head, elected faculty (one from each department) at the college level, and the dean.
- B. The applicant is responsible for developing and submitting to the academic unit head a portfolio of supporting materials. If the individual is also applying for tenure, only one portfolio for both processes should be submitted. The portfolio should demonstrate how the candidate meets or exceeds the established standards. The portfolio should consist of relevant supporting materials, including a table of contents, current vitae, all annual performance reports since last promotion, annual administrative evaluations since last promotion, and documentation of the following:
1. teaching effectiveness, e.g., student evaluations, teaching awards, peer evaluations, innovative teaching approaches;
 2. research/scholarly/creative accomplishments, e.g., publications, research/creative projects, photographs of artworks, finished pieces of work;
 3. service to the university, profession, and the general community as appropriate.
- C. The portfolio must be submitted in the fall semester according to the timetable established by the appropriate academic dean . Once the portfolio is completed and submitted, nothing will be added or deleted except according to academic unit, college, or university policy. Academic unit heads and deans may consider other pertinent information in addition to the portfolio during the review process.
- D. The academic unit head will make the portfolio available for review by all full-time faculty members in the unit holding rank higher than the candidate. These faculty members will constitute the academic unit promotion committee/panel for the candidate.
1. It is possible that two separate promotion committees/panels may be necessary in an academic unit, one for promotion to associate professor and one for promotion to professor.
 2. Administrators who are not involved in the promotion recommendation process at another level are eligible to serve on promotion committees.
 3. In academic units with two or fewer full-time faculty holding rank higher than the candidate, the academic unit head and each candidate will submit separately to the dean of the college a list of three names of full-time faculty members from other academic units in the university holding rank higher than the candidate. The dean will appoint members from these lists until there are at least three members of the academic unit promotion committee/panel.
- E. The committee/panel will make its recommendations to the academic unit head.
1. The academic unit head will notify each candidate in writing of committee/panel and chair/director recommendations in a manner and timeframe congruent with academic unit and college policies.

2. The academic unit head will make a recommendation on promotion even if not holding a rank higher than the candidate.
 3. Within five (5) class days of being allowed to review the written recommendations of the academic unit committee/panel and the academic unit head, the candidate may attach a letter of response addressing errors of fact in the recommendations. Such a notification and any subsequent response by the candidate will become part of the portfolio.
- F. Once the review process is completed at the academic unit level, all documentation will be forwarded to the candidate's dean.
1. The dean will follow college policy in assembling promotion committees/panels.
 2. The committees/panels will make their recommendations to the dean who will notify each candidate in writing of the committee/panel's and dean's recommendations in a manner congruent with college policy.
 3. Within five (5) class days of being allowed to review the written recommendations and comments, the candidate may attach a letter of response addressing errors of fact in the recommendations. Such a notification and any subsequent response by the candidate will become part of the portfolio.
- G. After the college has completed its promotion review, the portfolio, along with all academic unit and college recommendations and comments, will be submitted to the provost and vice president for academic affairs for review.
1. The provost and vice president for academic affairs will submit a recommendation on each candidate's promotion to the president, along with all materials and the recommendations generated at each preceding stage of the process.
 2. At the same time, the provost and vice president for academic affairs will notify the candidate of the recommendation submitted to the president.
- H. The president will review all materials and recommendations and make a recommendation to the Board of Regents.
- I. Promotion in rank is by action of the Board of Regents of Stephen F. Austin State University. Exceptions to the policies and procedures related to promotion must be authorized by the Board of Regents.
- J. Within the next class day following the action of the Board of Regents, each candidate will be notified in writing by the provost and vice president for academic affairs of the action of the board.

Cross Reference: Academic Appointments and Titles (7.2); Library Faculty (7.17); Tenure and Continued Employment (7.29); Leave of Absence (Faculty and Staff) (12.11)

Responsible for Implementation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Contact for Revision: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Forms: Application for Promotion/Tenure (Academic Affairs website)

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs