

**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY  
OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURE  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND VETERINARY MEDICINE, DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

**RESEARCH, EXTENSION AND CLINICAL FACULTY POSITIONS**

**PURPOSE**

A comprehensive university requires a cadre of personnel who are able to devote time to research, extension, and clinical activities. The purpose of this document is to establish a consistent set of titles for such positions and to establish promotion process for the positions. Existing procedures are to be used for establishing positions, advertising vacancies, and filling positions. Affirmative action regulations apply to these positions.

**POLICY**

**Position Titles**

Parallel to the Division of Academic Affairs ranks of Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor, the following levels of non-academic faculty appointment exist within the Division of Research, the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine, or the Division of Academic Affairs:

**Research**

Assistant Research Professor  
Associate Research Professor  
Research Professor

**Extension**

Extension Instructor  
Assistant Extension Professor  
Associate Extension Professor  
Extension Professor

**Clinical**

Clinical Instructor  
Assistant Clinical Professor  
Associate Clinical Professor  
Clinical Professor

The title consists of three distinct elements: rank, discipline, and function. The process for identifying the faculty member's given discipline is illustrated by the following: Associate Professor of Agronomy, Associate Research Professor of Agronomy, or Associate Extension Professor of Agronomy.

The above titles are for faculty without academic appointment. Faculty hired on a split appointment with one part being academic, which constitutes a tenure-track position, will carry a single professorial title consistent with their tenure-track appointment, i.e., assistant professor, associate professor, or professor. Those faculty members who hold joint research, extension, and clinical appointments, including adjunct appointments, but without an academic component, may use one or all titles as deemed useful, e.g., research, extension, or research and extension. Such use should be appropriately related to the variety of functions assumed in pursuit of their given role(s) within the Divisions and the university community. Faculty without an academic component to their appointment may, from time to time, engage in teaching provided they satisfy expectations of the Provost before being assigned, in part, to an academic budget. Such teaching, which must be approved by the department/unit head and dean/director prior to consideration by the Provost, does not constitute an academic component of appointment and, as such, does not move the individual to a tenure-track appointment. Additionally, an instructor cannot be considered for promotion to the Assistant Professor rank within Clinical, Research or Extension categories, but is eligible to apply to open positions.

For faculty on split appointments, units responsible for each element of the appointment are to have input in the promotion and annual review process.

Financial rewards for promotion will be uniform across all units and must be consistent with those of the academic faculty.

### **General Criteria for Appointment to Research/Extension/Clinical Positions**

All regulations of Mississippi State University concerning employment and promotion must adhere to the By-Laws and Policies of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (1970, with subsequent amendments). Specific attention is called to the section Promotion and Tenure Policy and Procedures in the MSU Faculty Handbook, [http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty\\_handbook/](http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty_handbook/) .

All research/extension/clinical faculty positions are non-tenure track and must be so indicated to prospective and incumbent holders of these positions or titles.

All research, extension, and clinical faculty employed by the University are expected to participate to some degree in service activities within the university, the discipline, and/or the community as well as meet high standards of professional integrity, collegiality and objectivity, and to further the goals of his/her unit(s) and the University. In addition, a person of research/extension/clinical rank must have an appropriate degree, or its equivalent in training and experience; a strong commitment to higher education, and in particular to the mission of Mississippi State University; and a willingness to assume the responsibilities and obligations appropriate to a professional or faculty university employee (see Faculty Handbook, [http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty\\_handbook/](http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty_handbook/)). In addition, the following is appropriate at each level.

1. Extension/Clinical Instructor: A faculty member with a minimum of a Master's degree or higher as appropriate to the profession, in a discipline appropriate for the position, who possesses the potential for successful performance in extension/clinical activity or creative achievement in a university environment and can contribute to the service of the unit, university, and/or profession.
2. Assistant Research/Extension/Clinical Professor: A faculty member with a terminal degree in the discipline, who possesses the potential for successful performance in research/extension/clinical

activity or creative achievement in a university environment and can contribute to the service of the unit, university, and/or profession.

3. Associate Research/Extension/Clinical Professor: A faculty member who has met the criteria for Assistant Research/Extension/Clinical Professor and has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a level of excellence appropriate for the rank in research/extension/clinical activity or creative achievement and can contribute to the service of the unit, university, and/or profession.
4. Research/Extension/Clinical Professor: A faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in research/extension/clinical activity or creative endeavors and can contribute to the service of the unit, university, and/or profession.

The University requires higher levels of achievement for promotion through the professorial ranks. For this reason, promotion is never granted routinely for simple satisfactory accomplishment. Rank also reflects comparable stature with others in similar disciplines in other university settings. Promotion is based on performance and demonstrated competence and not on length of service, but a reasonable time must elapse for the individual to demonstrate competence and have it confirmed by periodic evaluation. Professional achievement prior to appointment at MSU may be considered in establishing an appropriate initial rank.

### **Suggested Performance Standards of Professional Activities**

In every case, the performance of research/extension/clinical faculty members will be judged by all parties involved in promotion decisions on the basis of written promotion policies, and criteria specified therein. Those documents shall be developed by the faculty and shall apply to the faculty in specific units which may be departments, divisions, or centers. All criteria should be based on the application of the highest professional standards. Some suggested items to consider in establishing evaluative criteria at the unit level follow.

To qualify for excellence in research/extension/clinical activity or creative achievement<sup>1</sup>, the work must receive critical peer evaluation, using standards prevailing in the applicable discipline or professional area. It includes such things as development and validation of new knowledge essential for the maintenance of professional development and vitality; systematic, original investigation directed toward the enlargement of human knowledge or solution of contemporary problems; books published by commercial or university presses and articles published in refereed journals of international, national, or regional prestige; other books and published articles; success in obtaining grants for research/extension/clinical activities; presentation of papers to professional groups; invited participation in scholarly conferences; editorial and referee work in professional journals or other publications; book reviews in professional journals; evidence of substantive progress on long-term projects that meet the criteria above.

Service criteria may include activities which enhance the scholarly life of the university or the discipline, improve the quality of life or society, or promote the general welfare of the institution, the community, the state, or the nation. Thus it includes outreach and extension of academic knowledge to the public, participation on departmental, college, or university committees, service on regional, national, or

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<sup>1</sup> Creative achievement refers to significantly original or imaginative accomplishments in literature or the fine arts, and to effective experience or practice in professional fields.

international scholarly committees, boards, or review panels, participation on public boards as a representative of the scholarly community. Membership or participation in such bodies may constitute satisfactory service, but excellence requires leadership or significant contributions to improvement or process.

### **What are the expectations for promotion?**

The primary source of position expectations can be found in the Position Approval Request Form (PARF) which includes the job description as posted on the HRM web site. Promotion is not required for continued employment nor is it ever awarded based on length of service at MSU. It is based on accomplishment with respect to sustained increases in achievements.

The general requirements for research/extension/clinical faculty appointments are as follows:

For promotion to Associate Research/Extension/Clinical Professor the incumbent must have met the criteria for assistant research/extension/clinical professor and consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a very high level in research/extension/clinical achievements within their assigned duties. An associate research/extension/clinical professor should be developing a national reputation for his/her work by showing potential for sustained contributions to the university and to his/her profession or field.

For research professors, this is normally demonstrated by the pursuit of competitive research (proposals written and submitted), funding awards achieved, and peer reviewed publications. A strong balance of activity is expected (i.e., research awards and publications). Some service activity is expected of all MSU employees. External service activities that contribute to and provide an indication of the development of a national/international research reputation will also be considered during the review for promotion (e.g. national professional society involvement, journal editing, invited lectureships). This evidence must include external letters from academic research professionals in the discipline who themselves have established a national reputation and have no conflict of interest in reviewing the candidate's application for promotion.

For extension professors, this is normally demonstrated by consistent demonstration of an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in extension, research and/or creative achievement, and service, and who excels in at least one of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the departmental promotion documents, an associate professor is developing a national and/or international reputation, and is showing a potential for making sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession, field, or discipline. Some service activity is expected of all MSU employees. External service activities that contribute to and provide an indication of the development of a national/international research reputation will also be considered during the review for promotion (e.g. national professional society involvement, journal editing, invited lectureships). This evidence must include external letters from academic extension professionals in the discipline who themselves have established a national reputation and have no conflict of interest in reviewing the candidate's application for promotion.

For clinical professors, this is normally demonstrated by consistent demonstration of an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in clinical work and/or practice, teaching and/or instructional service, research and/or creative achievement, and university and professional service,

excelling in at least one of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the departmental or unit's promotion documents, an associate professor is developing a national and/or international reputation, and is showing a potential for making sustained contributions to the university and to his or her profession, field, or discipline. Some service activity is expected of all MSU employees. External service activities that contribute to and provide an indication of the development of a national/international research reputation will also be considered during the review for promotion (e.g. national professional society involvement, journal editing, invited lectureships). This evidence must include external letters from academic clinical professionals in the discipline who themselves have established a national reputation and have no conflict of interest in reviewing the candidate's application for promotion.

For promotion to Research/ Extension/Clinical Professor the incumbent must have met the criteria for associate research/ extension/clinical professor and consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a sustained very high level of achievement and has developed a national reputation in the person's area of expertise.

For research professors, the expectation to excel in obtaining competitive research awards remains, as well as, publications in peer reviewed journals, and presentations at highly refereed conferences appropriate to the individual's research work which are needed to establish national reputation. Other evidence of national reputation can be provided in addition to a publication record. This evidence must include external letters from academic research professionals in the discipline who themselves have established a national reputation and have no conflict of interest in reviewing the candidate's application for promotion.

For extension professors, the expectation is to consistently demonstrate an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in extension, research and/or creative achievement, and service, and who excels in at least two of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the departmental promotion documents, a professor must have a national and/or international reputation within his or her profession, area of expertise, or discipline. Other evidence of national reputation can be provided in addition to an extension/outreach record. This evidence must include external letters from academic extension professionals in the discipline who themselves have established a national reputation and have no conflict of interest in reviewing the candidate's application for promotion.

For clinical professors, the expectation is to consistently demonstrate an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in clinical work and/or practice, teaching and/or instructional service, research and/or creative achievement, and university and professional service, excelling in at least two of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the departmental promotion documents, a professor must have a national and/or international reputation within his or her profession, area of expertise, or discipline. Other evidence of national reputation can be provided in addition to a clinical service record. This evidence must include external letters from academic clinical professionals in the discipline who themselves have established a national reputation and have no conflict of interest in reviewing the candidate's application for promotion.

In extraordinary circumstances, based on previous career achievements, research/extension/clinical faculty may be initially hired at MSU as an associate research/extension/clinical professor or a research/extension/clinical professor based on the recommendation of the appropriate unit's promotion committee, director or head, and administrative Vice President. Appointment as an Assistant

Research/Extension/Clinical Professor can be made when a person has met the requirements specified herein, has a terminal degree in the discipline and has the potential to be successful at the University.

Each department or center shall develop specific criteria for performance evaluations which will apply for annual evaluations and promotion considerations.

### **Annual Evaluation and Reviews of Research/Extension/Clinical Faculty Members**

On an annual basis, each department/unit head or appropriate officer and each of his/her faculty members in research/extension/clinical faculty positions will agree in writing to the faculty member's objectives, responsibilities, and expectations. This written agreement must be consistent with the promotion criteria for research/extension/clinical faculty positions of the department and the University. This agreement will be reviewed by the next appropriate administrator, and a copy placed in the faculty member's promotion file. If the department/unit head and a faculty member cannot reach an agreement, the matter will be referred to the next appropriate administrator.

An annual performance review, based on the previous year's goals and objectives and consistent with AOP 13.24 (Annual Faculty Review Process) will be conducted by the department/unit head or appropriate officer and each research/extension/clinical faculty member in his/her department before the budget is made for the next year or when specified by the central administration of the University, whichever occurs first. A copy of this review will be signed by both the head/director and the faculty member. It will also be reviewed and signed by the next appropriate administrator and placed in the faculty member's personnel file. The faculty member may attach a dissenting statement to all copies of this review.

The department head or center director shall maintain a personnel file for each faculty member. No record in the file is to be added, changed, or withdrawn without the knowledge of both parties. The responsible administrative officer will make all pertinent information available to the appropriate individuals when the faculty member is a candidate for promotion, or when the information is needed in an appeals or grievance case.

### **Procedures for Promotion of Research/Extension/Clinical Faculty**

Promotion is never granted routinely for simple satisfactory performance or for length of service, but reflects progressively higher professional competence and accomplishment. Promotion will normally only be considered after a faculty member has served at least five years in rank so that sustained productivity at MSU can be demonstrated. Applications for promotion prior to that time will be regarded as early action and considered only for exceptionally strong and well documented cases. Rank should reflect comparable stature with others in similar disciplines in other university settings.

All faculty must first be evaluated by a committee of their peers. Directors of research centers/institutes must facilitate internal promotion procedures that are consistent with this operating policy. These procedures shall specify the procedures for establishing a promotion committee, eligibility for committee membership, external review letters procedures, a description of the process steps and reviews that must occur and time lines that are consistent with those established in this document. A candidate for promotion may utilize the promotion committee of the appropriate academic department that they are affiliated with if agreed to by the Head of the academic department and the center director. Faculty must be uniquely assigned to a promotion procedure. If the faculty

member's primary appointment is in a research center/institute, he/she will be evaluated by the center's promotion procedures. Otherwise faculty are evaluated by their academic department. Center/institute promotion procedures will be forwarded to the next higher unit(s) for approval to ultimately include the appropriate administrative vice president(s). The candidate makes a formal application for promotion by completing the MSU Application for Promotion and/or Tenure and attaching supporting documentation. Each unit will specify the format and the level of detail for the supporting documentation within their promotion procedures. Except for the candidate's optional written response to recommendations at each level, no material may be added or removed from this file after a decision has been made at the department/unit level, unless the candidate, department/unit head and the department/unit committee agree. The request will be made in writing, define what is being added or removed, state the purpose for the change in the application, be signed by all parties, and be included as part of the formal application.

External review letters will be solicited from professionals in the field who can provide an informed and objective evaluation of the candidate's work and accomplishments. The external reviewers will generally be professors at MSU peer or peer-plus institutions, and should not include individuals who are in a conflict of interest with the candidate. The identity of the external reviewers will be blind to the candidate except as may be required by law or ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The specific procedures regarding solicitation and use of external letters of evaluation are to be detailed in the unit promotion policy.

Recommendations concerning the application for promotion of research/extension/clinical faculty shall be submitted by the department or unit committee, the head or center/institute director and submitted to the administrative dean or Extension Service/MAFES director who will add his/her recommendation to the applicant's promotion materials and submit the packet to the appropriate VP(s). If there is not a dean/director level of administration, the department/unit recommendation will go directly to the administrative VP(s).

The faculty member will be officially notified as to the disposition at each level of his/her nomination for promotion. Written recommendations of decisions will come from each level in the process and will be placed on file in all the appropriate offices. These recommendations will also become the basis for future discussions between the faculty member and department/unit head on further professional development or growth of the faculty member. The faculty member has the right to discontinue the review process for promotion at any point in the process.

### **Schedule for Promotion Decisions**

The schedule for promotion of individuals holding research/extension/clinical faculty positions should follow the schedule outlined for academic faculty promotions as specified in Section V. Promotion and Tenure in the Faculty Handbook ([http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty\\_handbook/handbook.pdf](http://www.msstate.edu/web/faculty_handbook/handbook.pdf)). By August 15, the faculty member must declare their intention to apply for promotion and discuss the application decision with the Center/Institute Director. This early notification is necessary in order to acquire external review letters and to form a review board.

Any deviation from procedures outlined in this operating policy must be approved by the appropriate VP.

## Appeals

Faculty members who have been denied promotion may, within ten working days of the date of the decision from the appropriate vice president, request an appeals hearing before the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure. The request must be made through the appropriate vice president who will forward the request to the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure. Grounds for requesting an appeal are:

- a. That the decision was prejudiced, arbitrary, or capricious.
- b. That the promotion procedures contained in department-level or college-level unit document were not properly followed.

The appropriate vice president shall ensure notification of denial reaches the faculty member within two working days.

The University Committee on Promotion and Tenure, upon request of the appropriate vice president, will review the entire case. Working with the appropriate vice president and provost, the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate shall appoint two non-tenure track faculty to serve on the committee when an appeal has been requested. The appeal will be heard by at least three members of the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure and the two non-tenure track faculty. Members should recuse themselves from appeals by candidates who are relatives or with whom they have some conflict of interest, if the committee member has served in the previous levels of evaluation of the appellant or if for any reason the committee member feels he/she cannot be objective. A committee member will not vote on an appeal unless he/she has heard all hearings pertaining to the case. The committee will review all available pertinent information and will conduct interviews with appropriate persons, i.e., appellant, department-level administrator, department/unit level committee chair, college-level administrator, Extension Service Director, MAFES Director, and vice president(s). The committee will render its recommendation to the appropriate vice president.

The appropriate vice president will transmit the committee's recommendation along with his or her own recommendation to the university president, who will make the final on-campus decision. This decision will end the university appeals process.

## REVIEW

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every four years or as needed by the [Vice President for the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine](#) and the [Vice President for Research and Economic Development](#) and the [Provost and Executive Vice President](#).



**RECOMMENDED BY:**

/s/ Jerome A. Gilbert  
Executive Vice President and Provost

11/22/13  
Date

/s/ David Shaw  
Vice President for Research and Economic Development

11/22/13  
Date

/s/ Gregory Bohach  
Vice President for the Division of Agriculture, Forestry  
And Veterinary Medicine

11/22/13  
Date

**REVIEWED BY:**

/s/ Lesia Ervin  
Internal Audit

11/22/13  
Date

/s/ Joan L. Lucas by BCJ  
Legal Counsel

11/21/13  
Date

**APPROVED BY:**

/s/ Mark Keenum  
President

01/28/14  
Date