

**Mississippi State University
Operating Policy and Procedure
Promotion in Rank and Title of County Extension Agents**

PURPOSE:

A comprehensive university requires a cadre of personnel who are able to devote full time to teaching, research and extension. The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent set of titles for extension agents and to establish promotion criteria 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:

It is the policy of the Mississippi State University Extension Service to provide and maintain a system of promotion in rank and title for County Extension Agents. Promotion is never granted routinely for simple satisfactory service, but reflects progressively higher professional competencies and accomplishments. Promotion is based on performance and demonstrated competencies and not on length of service, but a reasonable time must elapse for the individual to demonstrate competency and have it confirmed by periodic evaluation. Reference Extension Agent Career Advancement Guidelines posted on the Mississippi State University Extension Service intranet for complete details. The system should encourage county-level faculty to participate in career track promotions and be recognized and compensated for their achievements.

Ranks and Titles:

Extension Agent I - An entry-level agent, who meets the requirements for employment with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, has the potential for successful performance in Extension work, and whose record indicates a potential for further academic work.

Extension Agent II - An agent who meets the criteria for Extension Agent I; has the potential for successful professional growth; demonstrates evidence of an ability to plan, organize, develop, implement and evaluate successful educational programs and services, and demonstrates qualities of leadership, drive and initiative.

Extension Agent III - An agent who meets the criteria for Extension Agent II achieved a master's degree (unless employed prior to July 1, 2002) and has consistently demonstrated innovative, creative and progressive performance beyond the satisfactory level and continues to demonstrate professional growth.

Extension Agent IV - An agent who meets the criteria for Extension Agent III possesses a master's degree and consistently demonstrates excellence in performance and service to clientele and community.

PROCEDURE:

- The Director initiates the promotion process through distribution of promotion information.
- Agent seeking promotion provides “Intent to Apply” form to supervisor for verification of eligibility requirements.
- Staff Resource Officer verifies eligibility for promotion consideration and notifies agent and supervisor.
- Agent eligible for promotion consideration submits completed application packet (dossier) to their Research and Extension Center Head.
- District Peer Review Committee reviews dossiers of candidates for advancement, identifies strengths/weakness, records vote and justification, and returns dossiers to Center Head. The supervisor discusses promotion status with the agent for determination on continuing with the promotion process. Changes can be made in the dossier at this time. Center Head writes letter with his/her recommendation to attach to dossier as it goes forward to the State Peer Review Committee.
- Center Head submits complete dossier to be considered for state review to the Extension Director’s office.
- The State Peer Review Committee Reviews all dossiers that have continued through the process. The strengths and weaknesses identified and recorded by the State Peer Review Committee will be added to the findings of the District Peer Review. The State Peer Review vote and comments are added to the dossier and returned to the Extension Director’s office for further review.
- The Extension Director consults with State Program Leaders for review of all promotion materials and recommendations.
- Extension Director makes promotion decisions and sends notification of status.
- Appeals concerning denial of promotion and rank must be filed within 10 working days of notification.
- Extension Director advises Vice President of promotion decisions.
- Vice President makes recommendations to the President.
- Promotion decisions become effective.

REVIEW:

This Operating Policy will be reviewed every four years or as needed by the Director of the Mississippi State University Extension Service and Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine or his designee.

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