



# 2024-25 VIRGINIA TECH FACULTY HANDBOOK

Approved June 11, 2024

Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

**Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost**

**Office of Vice President for Policy and Governance**

This document is subject to change. Please refer to the provost's website for the most recent Faculty Handbook information.

University policies are available online, as are many important procedures maintained by the Procurement Department, Human Resources, and the Controller's Office websites are updated as policies and procedures change. Please refer to them for issues not addressed in the Faculty Handbook.

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status; or otherwise discriminate against employees or applicants who inquire about, discuss, or disclose their compensation or the compensation of other employees or applicants; or any other basis protected by law.

Faculty have the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and to comply with this handbook and the relevant policies of Virginia Tech.

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# CHAPTER ONE – MISSION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY

## 1.0 Mission of the University

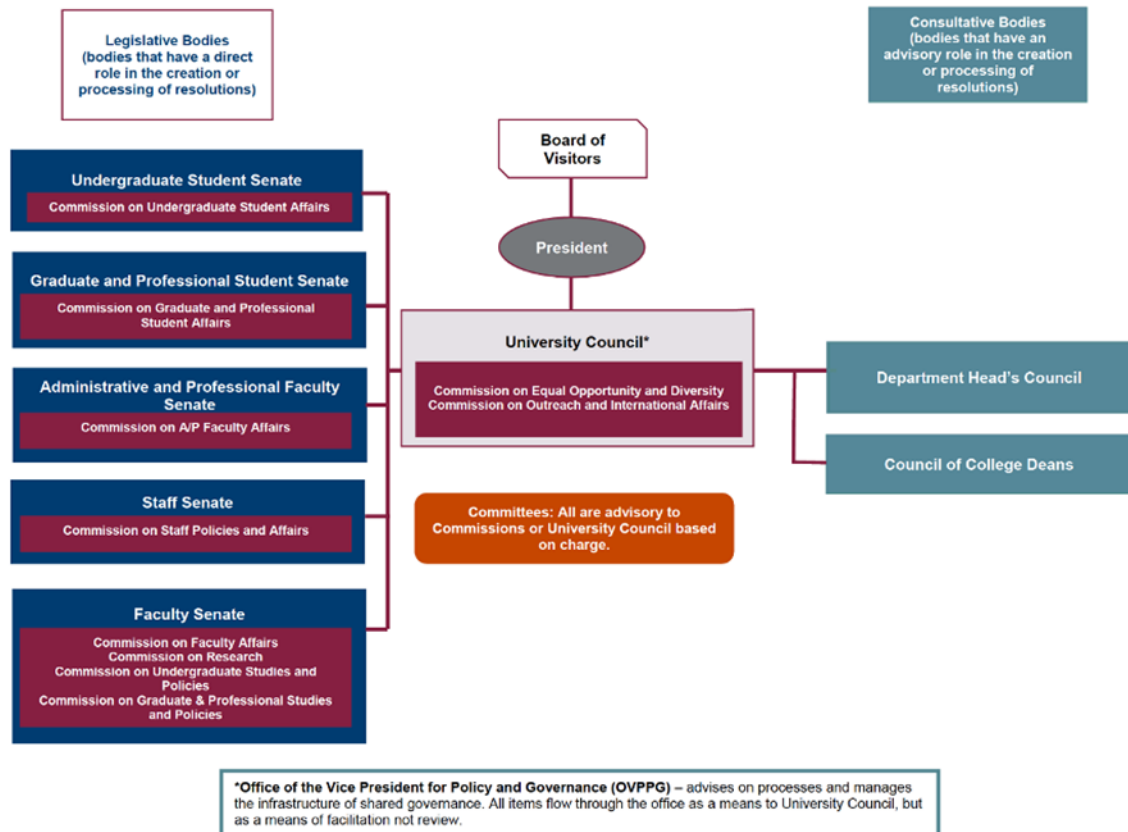
Inspired by our land-grant identity and guided by our motto, *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) is an inclusive community of knowledge, discovery, and creativity dedicated to improving the quality of life and the human condition within the Commonwealth of Virginia and throughout the world.

## 1.1 Governance of the University

The Board of Visitors is the governing body of the university. The board appoints the president of the university who serves as the chief executive. The president may delegate authority to the executive vice president and provost (provost), executive vice president and chief operating officer, and vice presidents.

### 1.1.1 University Shared Governance Structure

[Consult Shared Governance at Virginia Tech website.](#)



### 1.1.2 Board of Visitors

Consult [Board of Visitors](#) website. By statute of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the governing body of the university is the Board of Visitors, which exists as a corporation under the control of the Virginia General Assembly. The board is comprised of 14 members, 13 of whom are appointed by the governor subject to confirmation by the Senate of Virginia, with a four-year term that is eligible for reappointment of a successive four years. The president of the Board of Agriculture

and Consumer Services serves as the fourteenth member, by virtue of position, with the term running concurrently from July 1 through June 30. A rector and a vice-rector are elected annually among the members of the board, and, by state statute, either the rector or vice-rector must be a resident of Virginia. The vice president for policy and governance serves as secretary to the board. The board appoints two non-voting student representatives (one undergraduate, one graduate or professional) who serve a one-year term and attend open sessions of board meetings.

The presidents of the faculty senate, administrative and professional faculty senate, and staff senate sit with the board at all meetings, except those held in closed session, and participate in discussion without authority to vote or to make or second motions. By law, the board meets at least once a year, but typically meets quarterly to consider policy matters and to review the progress of the university.

The Board of Visitors is responsible for institutional policies except those under the direct jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Virginia. By statute, the board is charged with the care, preservation, and improvement of university property and with the protection of the safety of students and other persons residing on such property. The board regulates the government and discipline of students. The board has authority over the roads and highways within the university's campuses and may prohibit entrance to the property of undesirable and disorderly persons or eject such persons from the property. The board is also responsible for ensuring that the university does not incur an unauthorized deficit or members shall be held personally liable.

Some examples of the board's responsibilities as specified by state statute or developed through tradition and practice include:

- appointing the president
- approving appointments and setting salaries of faculty, university staff, and other personnel
- establishing fees, tuition, and other charges imposed by the university on students
- reviewing and approving university budgets and overseeing the university's financial management
- reviewing and approving the establishment and discontinuance of new colleges, departments, schools, and degrees
- ratifying appointments by the president or vice presidents
- representing the university to citizens and officers of the Commonwealth of Virginia, especially in clarifying the purpose and mission of the university
- approving promotions, grants of tenure, and employment of selected individuals
- reviewing and approving physical plant development of the campuses
- the commemorative naming of buildings and other major facilities on campus
- reviewing and approving real property transactions
- exercising the power of eminent domain
- reviewing and approving personnel policies for the faculty and university staff
- subject to the management agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and Virginia Tech, the board has full responsibility for the management of Virginia Tech.



### **1.1.3 Principles of Shared Governance**

[Shared Governance at Virginia Tech](#). There is a wide recognition of the complexity of university governance and general acknowledgment of the need for faculty, staff, and student participation in the conduct of university affairs.

### **1.1.4 University Council**

The purpose of the [University Council](#) and its internal and related components is to assist the president of the university in formulating and implementing university policy in a manner that ensures that Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University always strives effectively toward its goals, which are:

- To provide an environment conducive to the pursuit of learning, teaching, scholarship, research, and service.
- To anticipate and meet the educational needs of society in general and the Commonwealth and nation in particular.

The University Council, the senates, and the university and senate commissions constitute the main bodies for policy formulation at Virginia Tech. The senate commissions formulate and recommend policies to the senates, which in turn recommend policies to the University Council; the university commissions formulate and recommend policies directly to the University Council.

The University Council makes policy recommendations to the president. Final authority rests with the president of the university and the Board of Visitors.

Because the University Council, the senates, and university commissions, and the standing committees constitute a legislative system, their charges, memberships, relationships and the processes they hold in common are defined in the University Council Constitution and Bylaws. All aspects of each senate not defined in these documents shall be defined in senate constitutions and bylaws. The Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance maintains membership lists available on the university's governance website.

### **1.1.5 University Council Cabinet**

The purposes of the University Council Cabinet are to provide a small-scale forum for in-depth conversation among shared governance leaders, with a particular focus on the interests and concerns of senate leaders; to help shared governance leaders remain well-informed of the state of the university; and to facilitate collaborative decision-making and coordinated effort across the components of shared governance.

**Functions** The functions of the University Council Cabinet are to serve as the executive body of the University Council, to which it is responsible and to which it reports regularly on the disposition of matters submitted to it; to administer the business of the University Council between Council meetings; and to discharge other duties in accordance with the University Council Constitution and Bylaws, including the application of the university mission initiative process described in Article XII of the constitution and Article IV of the bylaws, and the annual shared governance review called for by Article VI of the bylaws.

### 1.1.6 University Senates

- [Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate](#)
- [Faculty Senate](#)
- [Graduate and Professional Student Senate](#)
- [Staff Senate](#)
- [Undergraduate Student Senate](#)

**Purpose.** The senates are accountable to and responsible for representing the collective voice of their respective constituencies. Each senate provides representation within the university's system of shared governance for faculty, administrative and professional (A/P) faculty, staff, undergraduate students, and graduate and professional students.

**Functions.** Each senate has a specific area of legislative authority and responsibility as defined below and at least one senate commission assigned to it that is responsible for the crafting of policy recommendations in the form of resolutions. To be advanced as recommendations to the University Council, resolutions of senate commissions must be approved by the appropriate senate under procedures described in Article III of the University Council Bylaws. In addition to their legislative activities, senates appoint or recommend members to University Council, senate and university commissions, and committees; facilitate the exchange of information between constituencies; provide referral for individual concerns and issues to appropriate organizations or personnel; and accept and share responsibility with the administration, faculty, A/P faculty, staff, and students in all efforts to attain the shared goals of the university.

Senates have the right to consider any matter of general interest to its members and to seek wider discourse on these topics within the university's system of shared governance. Concerns outside the purview of any senate or commission as delineated in the University Council's constitution may not be advanced as resolutions.

To ensure that constituents can identify their senate representatives, senates will maintain membership rolls that are available on public or secure websites accessible to constituents.

### 1.1.7 University and Senate Commissions

There are two kinds of commissions: senate commissions, which are part of and whose policy recommendations are voted on by senates before advancing to the University Council; and university commissions, which are part of and whose policy recommendations are made directly to the University Council.

Commissions gather administrators, faculty, A/P faculty, staff, undergraduate students, and graduate and professional students in relatively small numbers to discuss topics and develop policies in the area defined by the commission charge. Each commission is chaired by a faculty, A/P faculty, staff, undergraduate student, or graduate and professional student member and advised by an ex officio administrative faculty member who oversees the unit or office at the core of the commission's charge and provides support and information to guide the commission's work. Ex officio and administrative faculty members may not serve as chair of any commission. While the membership of commissions varies in number and mix depending on the charge, all commissions include at least one faculty, A/P faculty, staff, undergraduate student, and graduate and professional student member, making them microcosms of shared governance.

The charges of all commissions can be found in the University Council constitution and bylaws. Though senate commissions are part of senates, their charges are maintained within the University Council Constitution and cannot be altered directly by the senates. Memberships of commissions are maintained in the University Council Bylaws.

#### University Commissions (2)

(part of and whose policy recommendations are made directly to the University Council)

- [Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity](#)
- [Commission on Outreach and International Affairs](#)

#### Senate Commissions (8)

(part of and whose policy recommendations are made to one of the senates)

##### Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate

- [Commission on Administrative and Faculty Affairs](#)

##### Faculty Senate

- [Commission on Faculty Affairs](#)
- [Commission on Research](#)
- [Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies](#)
- [Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies](#)

##### Staff Senate

- [Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs](#)

##### Undergraduate Student Senate

- [Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs](#)

### **1.1.8 University Standing Committees**

University Standing Committees (9) are constituted on a continuing basis by the president on recommendation of the University Council for matters of university-wide interest. Memberships are set forth in the University Council Constitution.

- Academic Support
- Athletics
- Budgeting and Planning Campus Development
- Climate Action, Sustainability, and Energy Commencement
- Employee Benefits Faculty Honorifics
- Information Technology Services and Systems Intellectual Property
- Library
- Transportation and Parking
- University Curriculum Committee for General Education

### **1.1.9 Council of College Deans**

The Council of College Deans is a consultative body to the University Council and elects a member to the University Council Cabinet.

### **1.1.10 Department Heads Council**

Inclusive of school directors, the [Department Heads Council](#) is a consultative body to the University Council and elects a member to the University Council Cabinet.

### **1.1.11 College Faculty Associations**

The faculty associations are organized in the colleges of agriculture and life sciences; architecture, arts, and design; engineering; liberal arts and human sciences; natural resources and environment; science; veterinary medicine; University Libraries; and Virginia Cooperative Extension (“Extension”). These associations have constitutions that designate the purposes of the association, membership, officers, election procedures, standing committees and their duties, and other organizational and procedural matters. The Pamplin College of Business vests similar rights and responsibilities on its faculty members through a less formal structure. The Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) faculty are formally organized in a faculty assembly the composition of which is determined by the school’s bylaws.

## **1.2 University Shared Governance and Policy Support**

The [Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance](#) (OVPPG) administers the processes and procedures that support the university’s shared governance system. The OVPPG supports the university council and cabinet, the senates, commissions, and university committees. The OVPPG manages the processes of approval for policy resolutions and all matters that ultimately go to the university’s Board of Visitors for review and approval. In addition, the (OVPPG) manages and administers the university’s policy review process, coordinates communication of new and revised policies to the university community and maintains the university’s official policy archive, policy numbers and documents. The university website is the repository of record for official university policies.

### **1.2.1 University Policies, Administrative Policies, and Presidential Policy Memoranda**

#### **1.2.1.1 University Policies**

Consult [University Libraries website](#). In addition to policies outlined in the Faculty Handbook, university policies are generally applicable to more than one office or department of the university. The University Council and university commissions constitute the main bodies for university policy formation. The university commissions formulate and recommend policies to the University Council, which in turn, makes recommendations to the university president. Final authority rests with the university president and the Board of Visitors.

#### **1.2.1.2 Administrative Policies**

Administrative policies address operational matters and include policies required for federal, state, or other regulatory and legal mandates. Administrative policies do not address matters that traditionally are primarily within the purview of the faculty, including but not limited to curricular changes, professional ethics and conduct, promotion and tenure, and faculty categories. Administrative policies are promulgated by the vice presidents who are responsible for the accuracy and timeliness of policies and procedures relating to their areas. This responsibility includes conducting a review of policies at least every four years and issuing proper notification of changes and updates to policies and procedures.

### **1.2.1.3 Presidential Policy Memoranda**

Presidential Policy Memoranda (PPM) provide information regarding policies and procedures that apply to specific situations, groups, or individuals. Presidential policy memoranda are issued by the university president and are available on the university's policy website.

The president may approve exceptions to any policy excluding matters prescribed by state or federal law or those policies that require approval by the Board of Visitors.

## **1.3 Central Administration**

The university's central administration includes the president, executive vice president and provost, executive senior vice president and chief operating officer, administrative and academic vice presidents, and academic deans.

### **1.3.1 University President**

[Virginia Tech's president](#) is appointed as the university's chief executive by the Board of Visitors. The president initiates proposed policies, executes approved policies, and administers the university. The president is the authorized officer through whom communication takes place between the board and the other employees of the university. The board, as the governing authority of the university, delegates authority to the president to oversee and to administer the policies of the board and manage the administrative, instructional, research, and public service programs of the university.

The President's Council includes all vice presidents, deans, institute directors and senior leaders reporting to the president. The Council is focused on continuous strategic planning and priorities that support the university's strategic plan, The Virginia Tech Difference, Advancing Beyond Boundaries.

The President's Cabinet includes senior university leaders and serves as advisory to the president.

The President's Advisory Group includes cabinet members and constituent representatives who offer perspectives to the president regarding academic, organizational, and operational matters.

### **1.3.2 Executive Vice President and Provost**

The [executive vice president and provost \(provost\)](#) is an executive level administrator responsible for creating, guiding, and achieving institutional priorities and strategies. The provost provides executive and strategic leadership to academic areas and has multiple vice presidents and /or senior vice presidents within their organizational structure. The provost is a strategic leader within the university and has broad operational, administrative, and financial authority. The provost has frequent interaction with the university president, Board of Visitors, and other senior-level stakeholders and constituents.

The executive vice president and provost reports directly to the university president. Appointment to this role is made by the university president and approved by the Board of Visitors.

### **1.3.3 Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer**

The [executive vice president and chief operating officer \(EVPCOO\)](#) is the university's chief financial, administrative, and operations officer. The EVPCOO is responsible for the financial,

administrative, physical, technological, and operational infrastructure of the university and leads these areas in support of its teaching, research, and outreach missions. The EVPCOO partners with the president, executive vice president and provost, the president's executive team, and other university leaders to advance the university's priorities.

The executive vice president and chief operating officer reports directly to the university president. Appointment to this role is made by the university president and approved by the Board of Visitors.

### **1.3.4 Senior Vice Presidents**

A senior vice president is a senior-level administrator responsible for providing executive and operational leadership for one or more divisions or major operating units within the university. The scope, portfolio, responsibilities, and complexity of the position are at the highest level and warrant the appointment of senior vice president. A senior vice president typically reports to the university president. A senior vice president provides executive and operational leadership for at least one vice president within their reporting structure and has broad operational responsibility across the university.

Appointment to the rank of senior vice president is approved by the university president and Board of Visitors.

### **1.3.5 Vice Presidents**

A vice president is a senior-level administrator responsible for providing operational and managerial leadership for a specific administrative and/or academic function or unit within the university. A vice president has broad discretion and decision-making authority relative to their assigned function and / or unit. A vice president reports to the university president, executive vice president and provost, executive vice president and chief operating officer, or other senior vice president and serves as a member of the president's council. A vice president may have operational responsibility or serve in a senior advisory role to the university president. Appointments to the rank of vice president are approved by the university president and Board of Visitors.

## **1.4 Academic Administration**

### **1.4.1 College and Academic Deans**

The college and academic deans report to the provost and are responsible for the academic activities of their college or academic unit. These responsibilities include the allocation and administration of resources, appointment and evaluation of faculty and support staff, and curriculum development. Department heads, chairs, and school directors report directly to their respective dean for all matters related to the programs of the college.

#### **1.4.1.1 College Deans**

Deans of the nine colleges are appointed by the provost, approved by the university president and Board of Visitors, and may be reappointed indefinitely.

- [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#)
- [College of Architecture, Arts, and Design](#)
- [Pamplin College of Business](#)
- [College of Engineering](#)

- [College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences](#)
- [College of Natural Resources and Environment](#)
- [College of Science](#)
- [Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine](#)
- [Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine](#)

[Virginia Tech is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\)](#). For purposes of accreditation, the college deans, or their designees, are responsible for ensuring compliance with any college-level “substantive change” as defined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The deans are responsible and accountable for monitoring and timely reporting of all actions that may require a substantive change notification and/or approval. Examples of substantive changes are outlined in [Policy 6500, “Academic Programs: Creation, Discontinuance and Delivery Site”](#).

#### **1.4.1.2 Academic Deans**

Academic deans are appointed by the provost, approved by the university president and Board of Visitors, and may be reappointed indefinitely.

##### **1.4.1.2.1 Dean of University Libraries**

The dean of [University Libraries](#) directs the University Libraries in providing the university with information, collections, and services necessary to support the learning, discovery, and engagement programs of the university. The dean allocates and administers resources and appoints and evaluates faculty and staff in support of the goals of the University Libraries.

##### **1.4.1.2.2 Dean of Honors College**

The dean of the [Honors College](#) directs the college in its mission to provide extraordinary educational opportunities for students of exceptional motivation and ability. The dean allocates and administers resources in support of the goals of the Honors College.

##### **1.4.1.2.3 Dean for Graduate Education**

The dean for graduate education directs the university’s [Graduate School](#), Graduate Life Center (GLC), and leads strategic graduate academic initiatives that advance a strong, diverse, and inclusive graduate and professional student community.

#### **1.4.2 Academic Department and School Administration**

The colleges are comprised of academic departments, and/or schools under the supervision of department heads, chairs, and school directors who report to a college dean. Department heads, chairs, and school directors are responsible for the growth and vigor of academic programs, recruitment and retention of faculty, administration of the curriculum, and the budget of their department or school. In certain cases, some of these responsibilities may be delegated.

Department heads, chairs, and school directors serve for terms specified by the dean. The president or the provost authorizes the appointment. The dean, in consultation with department or school faculty, analyzes the results of reviews conducted prior to reappointment and decides the length of term and procedures for renewal.

Faculty committees are integral to departmental, school, and college governance and are formed to make recommendations and otherwise assist the head, chair, or school director in curricular modification, in the selection of new faculty, and in the determination and application of policies.

#### **1.4.3 Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension**

The director of [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) (VCE) reports to the dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and is responsible for the administration of VCE programs in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and state and local governments, and the Cooperative Extension Service Program at Virginia State University. The director is responsible for VCE programs in agriculture, community and leadership, family, food and health, lawn and garden, natural resources, and 4-H/youth. VCE programs are offered in three of the university colleges and the director administers these programs under the guidance of a committee chaired by the provost. The committee includes the vice president for finance, vice president for outreach and international affairs, senior vice president of research and innovation, director of VCE, director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, and deans of the colleges of agriculture and life sciences, natural resources and environment, and veterinary medicine.



## CHAPTER TWO - ALL FACULTY

### 2.0 Employment Policies for All Faculty

Faculty employment policies and appointments are under the purview of the Board of Visitors.

#### 2.0.1 Annual Evaluation and Salary Adjustments

The Board of Visitors delegates the authority to the president or the president's designee for selected faculty appointments and compensation actions as outlined in the Amended Delegation of Authority for Selected Personnel Actions dated June 11, 2024.

The Board of Visitors annually approves a faculty compensation plan, including the authorization of an annual merit process guided by the university's Faculty Handbook and processes provided by the commonwealth. The faculty compensation plan provides information about the promotion and tenure process; the annual evaluation and salary adjustment process for teaching and research (T&R) faculty, administrative and professional (A/P) faculty, and research faculty; salary adjustments within the evaluation period, and the pay structure.

**Annual Faculty Activity Report (FAR).** All faculty are required to report annually on their research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities, as applicable. Guidance on annual faculty reports is provided by department, school, college, or administrative unit, as appropriate. Submission of a faculty activity report (FAR) may be required for consideration for a merit adjustment.

Virginia Tech uses an electronic faculty activity data system to collect and manage information about research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities. This system automates the production of annual faculty activity reports, promotion and tenure dossiers, and CVs, as well as department, school, college, and university level reports. The system also enables deposit and claiming of scholarly works in the [VTechWorks](#) institutional repository and will feed public web profiles using [VT Experts](#). Training for faculty is available through Virginia Tech's [Professional Development Network](#) and for departments on request. Faculty members should consult with their department head, chair, school director, or supervisor on the use of electronic faculty activity reporting.

#### 2.1 The General Faculty

The general faculty are those faculty members employed outside the classified and university staff personnel systems. Appointments to the faculty may be regular or restricted. Restricted appointments have start and end dates and should be designated as restricted in the terms of faculty offer (TOFO). Restricted appointments are commonly made in the cases of research faculty employed to work on projects with external funding, visiting or adjunct professorships, and other temporarily available faculty positions.

#### 2.2 Teaching and Research Faculty (T&R) - College Faculty and Research Faculty

T/R faculty include the college faculty and research faculty. Tenure-track, tenured, research, and instructional faculty not on the tenure-track. The duties of research faculty may have a small or no instructional component, and non-tenure-track instructional faculty may have a small or no research component.

### **2.2.1 The College Faculty**

The college faculties comprise teaching and research faculty (T&R) who are tenure-track, tenured, or instructional faculty not on the tenure-track, with full- or part-time positions in academic departments or schools (described in chapters three, four, and five in the Faculty Handbook).

Faculty members who relinquish full-time responsibilities in a college department or school to assume responsibilities elsewhere at the university may choose to continue to have their professional development evaluated by that department or school, and college. The same is true for someone who accepts a position in the University Libraries faculty, Extension faculty, or in the administrative and professional faculty. Evaluation for promotion and/or tenure is done according to academic department or school, college, and university expectations and guidelines. A merit salary adjustment is based on the responsibilities of the current position.

#### **2.2.1.1 Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty**

**Ranks: assistant professor, associate professor, professor**

College faculty include teaching and research faculty (T&R) who are tenured or on the tenure-track. These faculty appointments typically require a terminal degree and are appointed to regular positions. See chapter three of this handbook.

#### **2.2.1.2 Instructional Faculty not on the Tenure-Track**

**Ranks: assistant professor, associate professor, professor**

College faculty may also be instructional faculty not on the tenure-track appointed to regular or restricted positions. These faculty are teaching and research faculty (T&R). See chapter five of this handbook.

### **2.2.2 Research Faculty**

Research faculty are teaching and research (T&R) faculty designated to promote and expedite university research activities. Research faculty are typically employed on sponsored grants and contracts on a restricted appointment to carry out research or outreach projects. See chapter six of this handbook.

## **2.3 Additional Faculty Categories – University Libraries Faculty, Virginia Cooperative Extension Faculty, Administrative and Professional (A/P) Faculty**

### **2.3.1 University Libraries Faculty on the Continued Appointment Track or with Continued Appointment**

**Ranks: assistant professor, associate professor, professor**

University Libraries faculty with continued appointment or on the continued appointment-track are in chapter four of this handbook.

University Libraries faculty may or may not hold an appointment in a college. They perform a unique and indispensable function in the educational process and share many of the professional concerns of their college colleagues. The university recognizes the need to protect the academic freedom of librarians in their responsibility to ensure the availability of information and ideas, no matter how controversial, so that teachers may freely teach, and students may freely learn.

The rank held by a University Libraries faculty member does not imply a particular rank in any college department or school. University Libraries faculty may hold concurrent adjunct status in a college department or school to formally recognize their contributions to the undergraduate or graduate program.

### **2.3.2 Virginia Cooperative Extension Faculty (Extension)**

**Rank: lecturer**

Extension faculty are administrative and professional (A/P) faculty and covered by policies in chapter seven.

The rank held by a faculty member in Extension does not imply a particular rank in any college department or school. Extension faculty may hold concurrent adjunct status in a college department or school to formally recognize their contributions to the undergraduate or graduate program.

### **2.3.3 Administrative and Professional (A/P) Faculty**

Employment policies for administrative and professional (A/P) faculty are described in chapter seven of this handbook. A/P faculty may or may not hold an appointment in an academic college. Policies regarding the assignment of a faculty rank in a college department or school for an administrative or professional faculty member are in chapter seven.

#### **2.3.3.1 Administrative Faculty**

Administrative faculty members are referred to as executive or senior administrators to accurately reflect the nature of these appointments (See chapter one Central Administration and chapter seven Administrative Faculty of this handbook).

Administrative faculty may have a rank other than lecturer, may hold an academic rank in a college department or school, and may be tenured. A/P faculty members with academic rank are considered General, College, or T&R faculty.

#### **2.3.3.2 Professional Faculty**

**Rank: lecturer**

Professional faculty are administrators with responsibilities in a variety of roles and appointments. The professional A/P faculty include positions with significant managerial, supervisory, and budgetary oversight within a unit, and positions that provide direct services. Professional faculty may direct or provide support for academic, administrative, Extension, outreach, athletic, or other programs. They work in information technology, budget or finance, human resources, public relations, development, and architectural or engineering functions. Promotion is recognized by salary adjustment and/or a change in functional title rather than promotion in faculty rank.

### **2.3.4 Emeritus or Emerita Designation**

Consult [Emeritus or Emerita Status page](#) on the provost's website. The title of emeritus or emerita is conferred on retired members of the Virginia Tech faculty (as defined in chapter two of this handbook) who have made exemplary contributions to the university and are recommended to the Board of Visitors for approval by the provost and president.

All nominations for emeritus or emerita designation should, through a draft resolution for the Board of Visitors, describe the faculty member's exemplary contributions and academic citizenship

across any of Virginia Tech's mission areas of teaching, research or creative activity, and engagement. These contributions may, for example, be demonstrated through teaching awards, leadership or extensive service in transformative university initiatives, especially impactful community engagement, or evidence of national or international distinction. The expectation and desire is that emeritus/emerita faculty will have ongoing engagement with Virginia Tech, however, in some instances the emeritus/emerita designation may be conferred as a recognition of past contributions to Virginia Tech, without an expectation of continued engagement.

### **2.3.5 The Faculty of Health Sciences**

The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) promotes continued growth, improvement, and integration in biomedical and health sciences research and educational programs at Virginia Tech. The FHS serves as an organizational home for (a) faculty members who are appointed to it due to their research, teaching, outreach, and/or administrative accomplishments and responsibilities, and (b) interdisciplinary graduate programs in biomedical and health sciences. Faculty appointed to the FHS must have a graduate or professional degree in a relevant discipline.

Faculty appointments to the FHS are term (fixed period) appointments, ranging from one to five years, and are renewable without limit with the agreement of all appropriate parties. The FHS does not award tenure. A faculty member employed by Virginia Tech must have a primary appointment in a senior management unit, college or school, institute, or vice-presidential unit. Faculty members employed at other institutions who wish to be appointed to the FHS must have an adjunct or affiliated appointment in a Virginia Tech senior management unit, college or school, institute, or vice-presidential unit.

#### **2.3.5.1 Leadership of the Faculty of Health Sciences**

The executive vice president and provost (provost) appoints the vice president of health sciences and technology to lead the Faculty of Health Sciences. The vice president reports directly to the provost. The vice president enhances health science-related work across the university; leads efforts to develop curriculum, research, and engagement at the intersection of health sciences and technology; expands interdisciplinary graduate programs in biomedical and health sciences; leads an internal advisory group that advises the senior leadership on new strategic directions and promising funding opportunities; and leads and facilitates coordination of clinical, research, and educational relationships internally and with external institutions.

#### **2.3.5.2 Types of Appointments to the Faculty of Health Sciences**

The vice president of health sciences and technology establishes a selection process for faculty appointments to the FHS, selection is based on research, teaching, outreach, and/or administrative contributions to Virginia Tech's biomedical and/or health sciences initiatives. The selection process involves an evaluation of the individual's application and a recommendation to the provost. The provost makes the final decision and informs the individual of the outcome of the application by letter.

Appointments to the FHS may be made in any faculty category, with rank determined by qualifications. The usual title is [rank] of health sciences. Appointment to the FHS is a secondary title at the existing rank for current Virginia Tech Faculty members. Qualifications for appointment within each rank are described in the appropriate chapter in this handbook. Faculty members with

adjunct or affiliated appointments may be appointed using an unqualified title (assistant professor, associate professor, professor) followed by “of health sciences,” as the FHS does not award tenure and service in this role is not tenure-earning.

### **2.3.5.3 The Faculty of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM)**

Faculty members at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) are of two types. Faculty employed by the university or faculty employed by other entities (in most cases Carilion Clinic). At all times, regardless of employer, faculty members providing instruction, academic support, or performing academic duties or roles as a VTCSOM faculty member are governed by the university’s policies and procedures.

The VTCSOM initiates, defines, and contracts for professional services requested from a Virginia Tech faculty member. The contract may be for a buyout of the faculty member’s time through a sponsored project, or the faculty member may be paid directly through overload (wage) compensation. The payment mechanism reflects the level of time commitment, the ability of the department or school to release the faculty member from current assignments, and the needs of both Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and the faculty member’s department or school.

As part of its commitment to partnership, Virginia Tech provides faculty mentorship of medical student research projects without additional compensation or buyout.

Faculty members employed by the university and whose appointment is in a college other than the VTCSOM are eligible for appointment in the VTCSOM. The dean of the VTCSOM administers a process for the selection and appointment of faculty members. The process includes coordination and agreement with the faculty member, the appropriate department head, chair, school director, or supervisor, and the dean of the faculty member’s college. A recommendation is made to the provost who makes the final decision and communicates the decision to all parties. Appointments may be made in any faculty category with rank determined by qualifications. The usual title is (rank) of (discipline), for faculty members employed by the university this is a secondary title at the existing rank. Adjunct or affiliated faculty members may be appointed using an unqualified title (assistant professor, associate professor, professor) followed by the appropriate disciplinary designation (e.g., pediatrics). Faculty members employed by the university and with tenure-track or tenured appointments external to the VTCSOM earn or retain tenure in their primary department or school and college. Faculty members employed by the university are not eligible for tenure-to-title in the VTCSOM.

Payments made to Virginia Tech faculty members are made through an approved Virginia Tech payroll mechanism. Virginia Tech faculty members may not hold a private consulting contract with Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine since this would violate the Virginia Conflict of Interests Act.

#### **2.3.5.3.1 Faculty Buyout Agreements with Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine**

A buyout of a college faculty member’s time is appropriate when the professional services requested are of longer duration and/or exceed 20% of the faculty member’s time (more than one day per week, for example). A buyout may also be used in the context of shorter duration commitments if determined to be in the best interest of Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine,

the Virginia Tech department or school, and the faculty member. Buyouts work as any other sponsored project buyout, releasing salary savings to the department, school and/or college to hire behind as needed, and requiring approval by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor, and dean.

### **2.3.5.3.2 Faculty Overload Payment Agreements with Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine**

Overload or wage payments that are made directly to the faculty member are appropriate for short duration and/or occasional professional services rendered to Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (usually up to 20% time or one day per week). The rate of payment is established by the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine as a general rate of compensation or in individual negotiation with the faculty member.

Faculty members may earn up to 33⅓% of their current salary through all overload wage payments, including the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, Continuing and Professional Education, or other authorized special wage payments during the period of their Virginia Tech contract. Faculty on 10-, 11-, or 12-month research extended appointments may also earn up to this limit as overload compensation during their contract period.

Summer pay from all Virginia Tech sources (e.g., summer school, funded research paid as wages, Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, etc.) for nine-month faculty members may not exceed 33⅓% of the prior academic year (AY) salary.

Contracts for professional service to the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine paid as overload compensation may not exceed the current time limitations defined in the consulting policy, which is one day per week or five days in a five-week period. Time limitations also include the accumulation of other types of authorized special or external activity, including Continuing and Professional Education and consulting. University policies on conflict of commitment set the expectation that a faculty member's primary professional responsibility is to the university.

Overload agreements and payments require approval of the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor, and dean. In lieu of salary compensation, a faculty member may choose to receive an equivalent contribution to an operating allocation in support of professional activities.

## **2.4 Faculty Search Processes**

Faculty recruitment and search processes are available on the [Human Resources Faculty Recruiting Guidelines page](#). These processes apply to all types of full-time, regular, faculty positions. Search exemptions may be approved under specified circumstances.

Upon approval of the position by the dean, vice president, or designee, search processes include:

- The establishment of a representative search committee.
- The development of a tailored, aggressive search strategy that usually includes national advertising in appropriate journals in the discipline.
- Personal contacts with colleagues.
- Follow up with women and underrepresented colleagues and doctoral students listed in relevant directories.
- Targeted efforts to identify a strong and diversified pool of candidates.

Prior to selecting candidates for interview, the chair of the search committee reviews the candidate pool with the dean, vice president, or designee, who makes a judgment as to whether additional recruitment efforts should be made. Documentation of the approval of the candidate pool should be noted in the university's recruitment and onboarding system. The committee reviews applications once a representative pool is established or recruitment strategies are exhausted. A limited number of candidates are usually invited for on-campus interviews. Prior to making an offer, the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor reviews the search and interview process with the dean, vice president, or designee.

For appointments with tenure or continued appointment in the University Libraries review and recommendation by the applicable departmental or school promotion and tenure committee or continued appointment committee is sought before a decision is made to extend to a candidate a firm offer that includes the granting of tenure or continued appointment, or the award of a rank higher than assistant professor. An offer of faculty appointment with tenure may be made with the review and approval of the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and the department or school promotion and tenure committee, the dean, a university promotion and tenure subcommittee, the provost, and the president.

#### **2.4.1 Equitable Searches**

It is the policy of Virginia Tech to provide equal opportunity for all qualified individuals while rejecting all forms of prejudice and discrimination. Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or military status; or otherwise discriminate against employees or applicants who inquire about, discuss, or disclose their compensation or the compensation of other employees or applicants; or any other basis protected by law. For inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies, contact the [Office for Equity and Accessibility](#).

Virginia Tech is committed to ensuring that all qualified individuals with disabilities can take part in educational and employment programs and services on an equal basis. The aim is to provide this opportunity in an integrated setting that fosters independence and meets the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Reasonable accommodations are made on an individual and flexible basis.

Virginia Tech is committed to increasing the number of women and underrepresented faculty and administrators. This commitment is stated and elaborated in the affirmative action program, Executive Order 11246, and other documents filed with federal and state officials. All recruitment and search processes and procedures are designed to ensure that searches are conducted affirmatively resulting in broader representation.

#### **2.4.2 Terms of Faculty Offer (TOFO)**

[Consult Human Resources Recruiting and Onboarding webpage](#). New appointments and reappointments are documented in the terms of faculty offer (often referred to as a "TOFO") prepared by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and approved according to procedures established by the dean or senior manager, signed by the candidate, and forwarded to Human Resources within the university's recruitment and onboarding system. Templates for

the different types of terms of faculty offer are accessed by authorized users of the university's recruitment and onboarding system.

The TOFO documents the category to which the faculty member is appointed, the faculty rank, appointment status (effective date, regular or restricted and, if restricted, an end date), the appointment period academic year (AY) or calendar year (CY), and other conditions relevant to the employment offer. If the appointment is tenure-track or continued appointment track, reference to prior service credit should be addressed, if relevant. The TOFO documents terms and conditions of employment contained in this handbook.

The terms of faculty offer for a restricted appointment must state the length of the appointment. In cases where there is no expected opportunity for continuation, the terms of faculty offer document also serves as a notice of termination. Continuation of a restricted appointment, even during the specified appointment period, is subject to the availability of funds, the need for services, and satisfactory performance. This information is included in the terms of faculty offer. Related letters of offer or reappointment should not contain promises that the hiring unit is unable to keep; the university looks to the department or school to make good on defaults. The department head, chair, school director, or supervisor's approval is required before an offer is extended.

See chapter six of this handbook (Research Faculty) for new appointments and reappointments for research faculty including postdoctoral associates. Research faculty are typically employed on sponsored grants and contracts on a restricted appointment to carry out research or outreach projects. Appointments to postdoctoral associate positions require approval from the Office of Research and Innovation.

## **2.5 Search and Appointment of Executive and Senior Administrative and Academic Leaders**

### **2.5.1 Search and Appointment of the University President**

The Board of Visitors establishes the procedures for the selection of a president when the vacancy is announced. Per the Code of Virginia, the Board of Visitors must solicit the input of the institution's faculty senate or its equivalent regarding the search for candidates for the position of chief executive officer of the institution at a public or private venue.

### **2.5.2 Search and Appointment of Executive Vice President and Provost (Provost), Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, and Administrative Vice Presidents**

When a vacancy occurs, the president determines the procedures that will be used for identifying qualified candidates, including the decision to engage a search firm and/or to appoint a university search or screening committee.

Where the position involves considerable interaction with college faculty, significant engagement of faculty members in the search and/or interview process is desirable and expected.



### **2.5.3 Search and Appointment of College and Academic Deans and Academic Vice Presidents**

When a vacancy occurs, the provost determines the procedures that will be used for identifying qualified candidates. The provost requests nominations for membership on a search committee from the appropriate faculty members and/or faculty association. The provost appoints a search committee from the list of nominees and may appoint additional members who shall constitute a minority of the committee. When a vacancy occurs in an academic deanship that has university responsibility spanning colleges and other academic units, the search committee shall include faculty representatives from all appropriate colleges.

The provost or designee serves as chairperson of the search committee. Ordinarily a national search is conducted.

After the qualifications of candidates are reviewed, references and colleagues of the best qualified candidates are consulted. A limited number of candidates are invited to visit the university. The search committee, representative of department heads, chairs, or school directors, academic deans, appropriate vice presidents, and the president interview the candidates. Candidates also meet with selected students and faculty members. The committee must provide internal candidates with fair opportunities to make their qualifications equally well known.

The provost seeks advice from those who meet with the candidates and seeks agreement with the search committee on the candidate(s) to be recommended. The provost's recommendation is made to the president, who authorizes making an offer.

### **2.5.4 Search and Appointment of Academic Associate and Assistant Deans**

When a vacancy occurs in the position of associate dean, assistant dean, or assistant to the dean, and the position does not involve responsibility for assignment of faculty activities or recommendations on salaries and promotions, it is filled on recommendation by the dean to the provost and the president. Department heads, chairs, school directors, and representative faculty should be consulted; a formal search committee is formed if the appointment is not limited to an internal promotional opportunity. If the position involves responsibility for assignment of faculty activities or recommendations on salaries and promotions, the search and selection procedures are like those used for deans, and the dean serves as chairperson of the search committee.

### **2.5.5 Search and Appointment of Department Heads, Chairs, and School Directors**

When a vacancy occurs, the college dean requests that the department or school nominate members of its faculty for a search committee. The dean appoints the committee from among those nominated and may appoint additional members who shall constitute a minority of the committee.

The committee elects its chair and meets with the college dean to determine appropriate conditions of the position, such as rank and available resources. The dean should share with the search committee a realistic assessment of the college and university's commitment to the department or school and its programs.

The position is nationally advertised unless the dean and the committee agree that the position should be considered a promotional opportunity restricted to candidates from within the department or school without national advertisement. Such a decision should be reached only for

a department or school that has the capacity to afford several well-qualified candidates from within its ranks. The decision may be influenced by the lack of a vacant faculty position in the department or school.

After the qualifications of candidates are reviewed, references and colleagues of the best qualified candidates are consulted. A limited number of candidates (ordinarily three) are invited, on approval of the college dean, to visit the university. The search committee, the college dean, and university officials, as available and appropriate, interview the candidates. Candidates also meet with selected students and faculty members. The committee must provide internal candidates with fair opportunities to make their qualifications equally well known.

The search committee seeks advice from those who meet with the candidates and makes its recommendations on the preferred candidate(s) to the college dean. After extensive consultation with the department or school faculty, the dean recommends the appointment of the department head, chair, or school director to the provost.

## **2.6 Appointment Types**

### **2.6.1 Regular Appointments**

Regular appointments are renewable term appointments with a presumption or consideration of reappointment. Regular appointments include “probationary,” “tenure-track, tenured” or “continued appointment-track/continued appointment” appointments. Year-by-year appointments of administrative and professional (A/P) faculty are also regular appointments. See chapter six of this handbook for circumstances in which a research faculty member may be on a regular appointment.

### **2.6.2 Restricted Appointments**

Appointments to the faculty may be made for which there is no presumption or consideration of renewal. Such appointments are called “restricted” and are designated with start and end dates in the terms of faculty offer (TOFO). Restricted appointments are commonly made in the cases of research faculty employed to work on projects with external funding, visiting or adjunct professorships, and other temporarily available faculty positions.

When a person on a restricted appointment is to be continued, a formal reappointment TOFO is required and should be issued prior to the end of the existing contract. The reappointment contract restates the conditions of the appointment. Any changes should be made explicit. If a salary increase is approved, it should be part of the reappointment contract. The reappointment contract requires the prior approval of the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor, dean, and the office of the provost. Appointments to postdoctoral associate positions require approval from the Office of Research and Innovation.

Faculty members on restricted appointments earn sick leave at the rate of five hours per pay period. Sick leave does not extend beyond the date of termination of appointment. Faculty members on calendar year restricted appointments earn annual leave at the same rate as faculty on regular appointments but earned annual leave must be taken during the term of appointment; accrued annual leave will not be paid on termination of appointment. Restricted faculty who are eligible to earn annual and sick leave may carry over their unused balances to the next leave year; however, the unused leave is not paid out upon separation.

### **2.6.3 Academic Year Appointments (AY)**

The department head, chair, school director, supervisor, or dean extends, in writing, new faculty appointments and renewals of term (fixed period) appointments using the terms of faculty offer (TOFO) document. Most faculty appointments in the academic units of the university are for the nine-month academic year; these are called academic year (AY) appointments. While the payroll dates for the academic year are August 10 through May 9, faculty are expected to be available two weeks prior to the first day of classes and two weeks following commencement. No annual leave is awarded within the academic year, but the discretion of the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor is recognized in assigning duties during periods when the university is not in session. Faculty members are expected to be available for work during such periods.

Although the annual salary assigned for an academic year appointment covers only the academic year, the salary is paid in 24 semi-monthly installments over the calendar year, with payment occurring on the first and sixteenth day of each month. (If that day of the month falls on a Saturday, the payment is made on the preceding Friday; if Sunday, the payment is made on the following Monday.) Payment is deposited directly to the faculty member's bank or financial establishment.

Faculty members whose appointments are for only part of the academic year receive a pro rata portion of the annual salary. Payroll information is available on the [Controller's website](#).

Faculty members on academic year appointments whose employment with the university ceases at the end of the academic year, or any academic term, may request (with proper notice) that all remaining installments of their earned salary be paid on the next available payroll after Human Resources has been notified and employment has ceased.

### **2.6.4 Research Extended Appointments for Faculty on Academic Year (AY) Appointments**

Under certain conditions, faculty members on academic year appointments may extend their base nine-month appointment to a 10-, 11-, or 12-month appointment reflecting the faculty member's sponsored research responsibilities.

Academic year faculty with approved research extended appointments may earn and accrue annual leave proportional to their appointments. Faculty members with one, two, or three months of sponsored funding are strongly urged to convert their nine-month appointment to a 10-, 11-, or 12-month research extended appointment, which entitles them to earn and use annual leave and to have the summer pay included as creditable compensation for retirement purposes in accordance with university policies. Unused annual leave will not be compensated at the time of reconversion or separation.

Consult the [Research Extended Appointments](#) page. A [form to request research-extended appointment](#) is available on the provost's website. The requesting faculty member must provide documentation for the additional months of funding. Requests for research extended appointments require approval of the department head, chair, school director, supervisor, dean (or appropriate administrator), and the provost, or the executive vice president and chief operating officer (or designee).

Research extended appointments are renewed annually with verification of sponsored funding by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor to support the continuation. [A form to continue a research-extended appointment](#) is on the provost's website.

### **2.6.5 Calendar Year Appointments (CY)**

Some faculty members are on a calendar year (CY) appointment with work assignments covering 12 months except for periods of annual leave. The kinds of positions that may call for calendar year appointments include department heads, chairs, school directors, administrative and professional faculty, and research faculty.

Faculty members who assume calendar year appointments while serving as a department head, chair, school director, or other administrative role retain the calendar year appointment only for the duration of the assignment. Upon returning to an instructional faculty position in a department or school characterized by academic year appointments, the faculty member resumes an academic year appointment with a corresponding adjustment in salary. (Instructional faculty who were on calendar year appointments prior to assuming the administrative assignment usually resume their prior calendar year appointment and salary upon completion of the administrative assignment.)

Conversions of appointment from academic year to calendar year or the reverse (or to any other appointment period acceptable under university policy) are done in accordance with standard formulas approved by the provost or executive vice president and chief operating officer. Any exception requires approval by the provost or the executive vice president and chief operating officer.

### **2.6.6 Summer and Winter Session Appointments**

The total of additional compensation earned through all university sources by any faculty member shall not exceed 33⅓% of the annual salary for the preceding academic year.

No summer or winter appointments, outside of the usual job responsibilities, are made without the consent of the faculty member involved.

**Academic Year (AY) Appointment.** Faculty members on AY appointments may receive additional compensation for engaging in approved sponsored research, Extension activities, summer, and winter session teaching and, as allowable, non-credit, or eligible for-credit instruction conducted by Continuing and Professional Education or teaching an eligible for-credit continuing education course on overload. The total additional compensation earned through all university programs by any faculty member on an academic year appointment shall not exceed 33⅓% of the annual salary for the preceding academic year. Consult the [Continuing and Professional Education site](#) and [policy 6362 Continuing and Professional Education](#)

**Calendar Year (CY) Appointment.** Faculty members on calendar year (CY) appointments may receive additional compensation for Extension activities, and/or summer and winter session teaching that is not considered part of their usual job responsibilities and as allowable, non-credit, or eligible for-credit instruction conducted by Continuing and Professional Education.

### **2.6.6.1 Summer Session Appointments**

Faculty members on academic year (AY) appointment may be invited by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor to teach one or more courses in summer session.

Faculty on calendar year (CY) appointments may be invited by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor to teach one or more courses in summer session for additional compensation provided that the course(s) are not considered part of their usual job responsibilities.

For purposes of sponsored grant and contract activity and for limitations on compensation May 10 to August 9 designates the summer work period. Faculty members who receive summer salary from sponsored projects must certify the effort expended on those projects during the summer period. Work on a sponsored project during the academic year for which compensation is then provided during the summer is specifically prohibited by federal regulations. Summer pay for sponsored projects is only justified by appropriate effort expended on the project during the summer period.

Only AY faculty members who have approved [research extended appointments](#) earn and accrue annual leave proportional to their appointments.

Alternatively, the faculty member can charge less than one, two, or three months of full-time salary to the sponsored project (or other sources as appropriate) and take uncompensated leave for the remainder of the summer.

### **2.6.6.2 Winter Session Appointments**

Winter Session is not considered part of the instructional year. Faculty members on academic (AY) or calendar year (CY) appointments may be invited by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor to teach courses in Winter Session

The faculty member receives overload payment for teaching a Winter Session for-credit course. Compensation for teaching in the session is negotiated by the faculty member and the department head, chair, or school director. Maximum compensation is set at 3.75% of the faculty member's annual salary for each one-credit semester course taught. An additional incentive grant may be negotiated up to a maximum of one month's salary. Additional compensation, including overload and any incentive grant is considered in the total allowable aggregate compensation of no more than 33⅓% of annual salary from the preceding academic year.

### **2.6.6.3 Winter and Summer Session Appointments for A/P Faculty**

Administrative and professional (A/P) faculty with approved [teaching qualifications](#) may teach during the summer and winter session with approval of their department head, chair, school director or supervisor. Guidelines set forth in [Policy 4071, "Policy for Staff Employed to Teach For-Credit Courses,"](#) and [Policy 4072, "Teaching Credit Classes and Overload Compensation for Administrative and Professional Faculty Members,"](#) apply.

## **2.7 Documentation of U.S. Citizenship or Lawful Authorization to Work in the U.S.**

In accordance with federal law, on or before the first day of their employment, new employees must provide documentation confirming identity and lawful authorization to work in the United States.

## **2.8 Conviction and Driving Record Check for Employment**

The university conducts a conviction and/or driving record check once a contingent offer is made to and accepted by the selected candidate, according to the provisions in [Policy 4060, "Conviction and Driving Record Investigation for Employment."](#) Human Resources coordinates the conviction and driving record check process.

A preliminary offer may be made to the selected candidate, contingent upon the results of the check. However, at no time should the selected candidate be allowed to begin work before the process is complete.

## **2.9 University-Sponsored Applications for Permanent Residency**

Virginia Tech welcomes the contributions of scholars from all over the world in carrying out its learning, discovery, and engagement missions. Employer-sponsored applications for permanent residency assure the international scholar's ongoing involvement in the life of the university and the work for which the employee was hired. To receive Virginia Tech sponsorship, all of the following conditions must be met:

- The position must have the potential to be ongoing with successive renewals over a period of several years. For positions funded from sponsored grants or contracts, the supporting unit must demonstrate a record of sustained external funding.
- The individual's appointment must be full-time and salaried, and in compliance with federal regulations, such as prevailing wage rate. The appointment may be restricted or regular, either academic or calendar year, as long as it is salaried, full-time, and there is an expectation of successive renewals over a period of several years. Wage employment does not meet this test.
- The position is significant and meets institutional needs as documented by the department or school and validated by the approval of the relevant senior manager. Significance may be signaled, in part, by rank and title, as well as documented in the job description and supported by the individual's credentials. These include instructional faculty (ranks of instructor and assistant professor or above, including clinical faculty and collegiate professor ranks, but excluding adjunct, wage, or visiting faculty members); research faculty (all ranks except postdoctoral associates, whose appointments are limited, by definition, to five years); administrative/professional faculty with significant expertise critical to the university; and staff members with significant expertise critical to the university.
- The department or school verifies that they wish to retain the employee in the position indefinitely subject to availability of funding, need for services, and satisfactory performance.

## **2.10 Qualifications for Teaching**

Consult [Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) on the provost's website. Virginia Tech uses the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) teaching credential guidelines to qualify instructors of record.

Virginia Tech must justify and document the teaching qualifications of all instructors of record as outlined by the SACSCOC. The SACSCOC does allow for special qualifications that fall outside these guidelines.

**Department or School Responsibility.** The department or school within which a course is listed or originates is responsible for qualifying instructors of record to teach by documenting credentials for any instructional site including the Blacksburg campus, any distributed university location, and any on-line/distance education. The qualifying department or school may be different than the employing department or school in some cases. Departments or schools are responsible for maintaining up-to-date documentation of teaching credentials for instructors of record. Changes in teaching credentials may occur after initial qualification (usually at employment as a faculty member).

**Documentation of Teaching Credentials.** Documentation of credentials includes a transcript cover sheet (now called Statement of Faculty Credentials for Teaching) accompanied by an official electronic or other form of official transcript. The cover sheet and transcript are submitted to Human Resources for entering into the university's Faculty Online Credentialing System (FOCS).

### **2.11 Dual Career Program**

Consult [Dual Career Program](#) webpage. Prospective candidates for faculty positions at Virginia Tech may have spouses or partners who are also seeking employment. The ability of a spouse or partner to find suitable employment is a crucial element in the recruiting process and may be a determining factor in the couple's decision.

The spouse or partner of a faculty candidate or administrator who is being recruited to Virginia Tech is eligible for participation in the dual career program. The spouse or partner of a current faculty member who has been recently hired or is negotiating a retention package is also eligible for participation in the dual career program.

The dual career program offers job search assistance for up to one year; advice regarding a résumé, curriculum vitae, and cover letter; assistance with interview preparation; and networking assistance. These services do not mean entitlement to employment or a guarantee of job placement. Guidelines that describe procedures for Virginia Tech's hiring of dual career partners are available on the Human Resources and provost's websites.

### **2.12 Advanced Study at Virginia Tech**

The university encourages and supports the education of its employees. Educational leave to pursue a degree elsewhere is one option available to faculty. In addition, faculty may enroll in for-credit courses or degree programs at Virginia Tech. The program is administered under the provisions of Virginia's general appropriations act and operates under certain constraints imposed by the state policy on educational aid to state employees.

The following provisions apply to full-time salaried faculty (including administrative and professional faculty and research faculty) who wish to take courses at Virginia Tech. Part-time salaried faculty are eligible for a partial tuition benefit. Only courses of degree programs approved in advance by the faculty member's department head, chair, school director, or supervisor are eligible for tuition waiver or reimbursement. Enrollment should not impede the usual work schedule of the department or school. Time spent attending class during usual work hours must be made up under a plan approved by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor unless the course is a work-related course required by the university.

Faculty who take courses must meet all admissions requirements, registration, and payment deadlines, just as any other student. Application for admission must be made and approval granted by the graduate school prior to the waiver of tuition for classes. If approved by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor a faculty member may register for credit or audit a total of 12 credit hours per calendar year, with no more than six credit hours taken in any enrollment period—fall, winter, spring, summer I, or summer II. (The year begins with fall term and ends with summer II.) Additional hours may be taken outside the normal work schedule with the employee paying all applicable fees in excess of those allowable for tuition waiver or reimbursement.

Instructional faculty members of the rank of assistant professor or above are not eligible to become candidates for a degree or to earn an additional degree at this institution. The policy is designed to avoid the awkwardness of faculty members evaluating their colleagues in the fulfillment of degree requirements. This policy may be waived on a case-by-case basis through appeal to the Commission on Faculty Affairs (CFA). CFA may find and recommend to the provost that in a specific case the purpose of the policy is not contradicted. This policy does not apply to degree-seeking administrative and professional faculty, or non- instructional research faculty.

### **2.13 Types of Leave and Leave Reporting for all Faculty**

Consult [Human Resources Faculty Leave webpage for leave information](#). Several types of approved leave, with or without compensation, are available to faculty members. Unapproved absence from assigned duties, which is not covered by an approved or earned leave, is subject to a subsequent adjustment in pay.

### **2.14 Special Leave**

A special leave may be approved in instances such as grant responsibilities, opportunity for a prestigious fellowship in residence at another institution, or similar activities of benefit to the individual faculty member and the university. Approval of the provost or executive vice president and chief operating officer, depending upon the reporting structure, on recommendation of the department head, chair, or school director, and dean (or appropriate administrator) is required when such absences involve salary payment by university general funds, either in full or in part. Such authorization is usually not granted for longer than one year. The host institution, agency, or sponsored project is expected to make a significant contribution toward the cost of the faculty member's salary and/or benefits. Information on [Special Leave and Research Leaves](#) is available on the provost's website.

### **2.15 Change of Duty Station**

Consult provost's Faculty Affairs webpage for a [Request for Change of Duty Station](#). A change of duty station may be approved in instances where a faculty member would be hosted by another institution or organization and undertake activities of benefit to the individual faculty member and the university. Approval of the provost or executive vice president and chief operating officer, depending upon the reporting structure, on recommendation of the department head or chair or school director, and dean (or appropriate administrator) is required. Such authorization is usually not granted for longer than one semester. In certain circumstances, the provost or the executive vice president and chief operating officer determines whether a change of duty station involving



institutional salary support is appropriate. Request for [Change of Duty Station form](#) is available on the provost's website.

## **2.16 Geographical Transfer**

Reassignment of a faculty member at the initiative of the university to a primary workstation located more than 50 miles from the current workstation is considered a geographical transfer. A department head, chair, or school director, or supervisor may request the geographical transfer of a faculty member to implement a programmatic mission of the university. The affected faculty member shall be involved in planning for the transfer prior to the submission of a formal request for transfer. The request for geographical transfer shall be transmitted in writing to a second-level administrator for approval with accompanying documentation justifying the need for the transfer of the selected individual. The justification shall describe the university program and the position to which the faculty member is being transferred. This description shall list the unique skills and knowledge required to fulfil the program's mission. The alternatives for meeting the requirements shall be outlined, along with the reasons for selecting the alternative of geographical transfer of the particular faculty member. A faculty member must be notified in writing at least six months in advance of the geographical transfer. The transferred faculty member shall be reimbursed for all allowable expenses as defined in the university [Controller's Office Procedure 20345: Moving and Relocation Expenses](#). A cost-of-living adjustment will be added to the faculty member's base salary during the period of employment in a high-cost area.

## **2.17 Continuing and Professional Education Activities**

### **2.17.1 Required Use of and Participation in Continuing and Professional Education Program Services and Facilities**

Contact Continuing and Professional Education for information. [Policy 6362, "Policy on Continuing and Professional Education,"](#) requires that academic colleges, centers, and administrative units designing and delivering continuing and professional education activities, both on-and off-campus, under the auspices of the Virginia Tech brand must work through Continuing and Professional Education. This includes work conducted by faculty in Blacksburg, as well as faculty delivering continuing education programs at university locations outside of Blacksburg. Alternate arrangements may be made in the case of lack of availability of appropriate space or mutual agreement between the sponsoring university entity and Continuing and Professional Education.

### **2.17.2 Overload Payment and Compensation for *Non-Credit* Continuing and Professional Education Activities**

Contact [Continuing and Professional Education](#) for information. Faculty members may be eligible for direct payment for non-credit instructional activity in Continuing and Professional Education programs.

All faculty members not supported by educational and general funds of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Continuing and Professional Education, or outreach programs are eligible for such payments. Faculty members supported by such funding whose job descriptions do not include activity in non-credit instruction may request approval of their dean or director (or appropriate administrator) and the provost or executive vice president and chief operating officer, depending upon the reporting structure, for participation for payment.

Non-credit teaching for direct pay is subject to the provisions of the university's consulting policy, i.e., the total of non-credit teaching and other approved consulting does not ordinarily involve more than one day per week and does not exceed five days in any five-week period. For purposes of limitation of consulting, each day in which non-credit instruction is undertaken is counted as one day, unless the participation does not exceed one-half day (as defined below), in which case it is counted as one-half day. Because of the scheduling requirements of certain Continuing and Professional Education programs, exceptions to the limitation of five days of consultation in any five-week period may be approved as long as the maximum of 39 days in the academic year is not exceeded.

For direct payment purposes, a day is defined as six contact hours of non-credit instruction; pro rata payments are made for portions of days, usually in units of 1.5 hours. For teleconferences involving televised delivery a day is defined as three contact hours.

To encourage faculty to develop academically innovative programs with significant market potential, faculty may request preparation time as part of the program and budget development process. This additional faculty compensation for research and development may not exceed three days for each day of instruction.

Research and development time is associated with two types of programs. The first type is research and project development undertaken for a specific organization. As such, the payment of the research and project development is assured with the other program services under contract. The second type of program involves those programs offered on a solicitation basis to members of a specific audience. The generation of revenues for faculty research and development are included in participant fees. The actual amount and timing of the faculty payment depends on program success. The agreement is subject to approval by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and director of program development.

If research and development initiatives are perceived by a contracting agency or department or school to be more extensive, the college has the option of providing additional compensation to faculty through college surplus funds or of buying their time in the summer. Such additional compensation beyond three days for each day of delivery requires the approval of the vice president for outreach and international affairs and the director of Continuing and Professional Education. Approval for such payment is required through the P14 payment process initiated by Continuing and Professional Education.

For a particular program, a daily payment rate is determined by agreement of program faculty in Continuing and Professional Education, the participating faculty member, and the faculty member's department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and is subject to the approval of the director of Continuing and Professional Education. Such a negotiated rate may depend on the anticipated enrollment and the budgetary constraints of the program.

The provost may set a maximum applicable daily payment rate. The provost advises the Commission on Faculty Affairs of any changes in the maximum applicable daily payment rate if set.

Continuing and Professional Education is responsible for seeking approval for direct pay (P14) through the university and authorizing final payment. Such payments are made after teaching services are provided.

In addition to the constraints imposed by the consulting policy, there is a limitation on the aggregate amount of such direct payments that may be earned in a faculty member's appointment year. Faculty members on calendar year appointments may earn no more than 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of their annual salary during the July 1 - June 30 appointment year. Faculty members on academic year appointments may earn no more than 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of their annual salary during the academic year. Payments made to academic year faculty members in the summer period will be included in the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % limitation of the previous academic year's salary that is currently imposed on summer payment from all university sources combined.

Costs of producing materials for Continuing and Professional Education programs are borne by the program budget, not by the operating budgets of any unit except where provided for that specific purpose.

### **2.17.3 Overload Payment and Compensation for *For-Credit* Continuing and Professional Education Activities**

The university's mission and goals include increasing outreach, continuing and professional education, and distance learning activities to serve the workforce and professional development needs of business and industry, government, organizations, and individuals. Some professional audiences seek credit course work to meet their educational needs—not just a short term, non-credit experience such as workshops or seminars. In some cases, these audiences look to some of the university's most visible and distinguished faculty members to deliver this programming. Often such programming involves a contract with businesses or organizations, which covers the cost of course delivery, including faculty compensation. The programs are generally delivered off-campus, perhaps at the organization/business site or elsewhere, or via distance learning.

The following policy guidelines provide information regarding compensation for faculty members involved in delivering for-credit continuing and professional education. For-credit programming designed for executive/professional audiences is included among programs eligible for additional faculty compensation; even if such programs are offered for individual enrollment rather than for employees of a specific corporation or agency; and even if course work is delivered at the faculty member's home base.

Overload responsibilities undertaken for supplemental compensation may be assumed only when the intended task is clearly outside usual responsibilities of the individual, as determined by the appropriate department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and academic dean; and the conduct of the task is clearly in the best interest of the university; the individual is eminently qualified to undertake the task; and such an overload is included within the overall time limitations of the consulting policy.

Continuing projects, or projects occupying an identifiable amount of time longer than a semester or more, are arranged on a released-time basis. Prior approval by the department head, chair, or school director and dean are required for all overload commitments undertaken for supplemental compensation.

Overload compensation may be approved in cases involving for-credit continuing and professional education where the faculty member is required to travel to an off-campus location or, the faculty member is delivering a program to students at one or more distributed campus locations through distance learning technology, whether the instruction is delivered in a synchronous or asynchronous mode, or, the faculty member is delivering for-credit course work as part of an executive/professional program approved for overload compensation, even if the course is being delivered at the faculty member's home base.

There should be no expectation that course work currently taught on-load, which requires a faculty member to travel to another location to teach, or for which the faculty member is delivering the program via distance learning technology, would automatically be considered for overload compensation. Determination of the faculty member's assignment is the responsibility of the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and dean. Distance learning instruction and teaching at off-campus sites are appropriate on-load assignments which faculty members are expected to fulfill without additional compensation.

Faculty members are not required to accept for-credit overload assignments for continuing and professional education instructional activities.

Faculty compensation is determined as part of the budget development and contract negotiation process and may vary based on discipline, level of expertise, effort required, group size, number of credits, and other factors usually considered in setting compensation for continuing education instruction. P14 payments for credit continuing and professional education course work also require the approval of the vice provost for faculty affairs. Contracts with businesses, organizations, or other approved revenue sources are expected to cover the full cost of such faculty compensation.

The department head, chair, school director, or supervisor is responsible for the fair and appropriate assignment of overload for-credit course work to faculty members in the department or school. To assure equity and appropriateness, the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor, and dean monitor the responsibilities and assignments of faculty earning additional compensation.

Faculty members on calendar year (CY) appointments may earn up to an additional 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % during the fiscal year, by teaching *non-credit* programs administered through the university; teaching an eligible for-credit continuing and professional education course on overload; and/or participation in a technical assistance agreement.

Similarly, faculty members on academic year (AY) appointments may earn up to an additional 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of their academic year salaries during the academic year through these approved activities. Earnings during the summer from all university sources, including those cited above, summer or winter session teaching, and sponsored research are capped at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of the prior academic year salary.

The consulting policy sets the institutional maximum on the number of days that a faculty member can spend in approved, paid professional activity while on salary. All approved activity—consulting, technical assistance agreements, for-credit continuing and professional education

course work, and non-credit continuing and professional education must stay within the consulting policy guidelines of one day per week or no more than five days in a five-week period. Six contact hours constitute the equivalent of one consulting day.

Exceptions require the approval of the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor, dean (or appropriate administrator), and provost or executive vice president and chief operating officer, depending upon the reporting structure.

## **2.18 Retirement**

There is no mandatory retirement age for university faculty and staff. See Human [Resources Retirement](#) and [Retirees webpages](#).

## **2.19 Resignation**

Faculty members who wish to resign should give notice as far in advance as possible. Faculty members with instructional responsibilities are expected to provide notice of at least one semester. The minimum acceptable notice for tenured, tenure-track, or non-tenure-track instructional faculty members is three months.

## **2.20 Non-Reappointment of Faculty Members on Temporary or Restricted Appointment**

For faculty members on temporary or restricted appointments for which there is no indicated opportunity for reappointment, the letter of appointment also serves as notice of the termination of employment. The appointment is discontinued unless notified otherwise.

Research faculty members are ordinarily on restricted appointments for a fixed period because of limitations of external funding. Reappointments may be possible if such funding is renewed but should not be assumed.

## **2.21 Non-Reappointment of Faculty Members on Regular Appointment**

The decision to non-reappoint a faculty member on a regular appointment may stem from many factors beyond unsatisfactory service, such as modification of programmatic emphasis, enrollment trends, a change in the nature of the position, or simply the intention to seek an appointee with superior qualifications or stronger potential for professional development. Non-reappointment does not require establishment or documentation of just cause.

### **2.21.1 Notice of Non-Reappointment for Faculty on Probationary, Tenure-Track or University Libraries Continued Appointment Track**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Notice</b>
<b>First year of employment (One-year term appointment)</b>	February 9 of academic year or three months before end of employment year.
<b>Second year of employment</b>	November 9 of the academic year or six months before end of employment year;
<b>Subsequent years</b>	12 months before end of employment year (May 9 for academic year appointments).

### 2.21.2 Notice of Non-Reappointment for Faculty on Regular, Non-Tenure-Track, Instructional Appointments

Years	Notice
Less than two years	At least three months before the end of the current contract for those who have been in a regular appointment for less than two years.
Up to five years	At least one semester before the end of the current contract for those on an academic year (AY) appointment; or six months for those on a calendar year (CY) appointment; for those who have been in a regular appointment for two years up to five years.
Five years or more	At least one year before the end of the current contract for those on regular appointment for five years or more (May 9 for academic year (AY) appointment).

### 2.20.3 Non-Reappointment for Research Faculty on Regular Appointment

Years	Notice
Less than two years	At least three months for those in regular appointments for less than two years.
Two years or more	At least six months for those in regular appointments for two years or more.
Prior to March 2001	For those research faculty appointed to regular positions before March 2001, the notice of reappointment is 12 months.

### 2.20.4 Notice of Non-Reappointment for Administrative and Professional Faculty on Regular Appointment

Years	Notice
Prior to one year	At least three months before the expiration of an initial one-year appointment (for example, if the effective date of an initial one-year appointment was July 1, then written notice of non-reappointment must be made by March 31 for termination effective June 30).
More than one, but less than two years	At least six months for administrative and professional faculty members employed by the university for more than one year, but less than two years.
Two years or more	At least 12 months for administrative and professional faculty members employed by the university two years or more.

### 2.22 Unclaimed Personal Property

All personal property - tangible, intangible, electronic, or other personal property - is removed by close of business on the faculty member's final day of employment at Virginia Tech unless prior approval is granted. The university is not responsible for keeping or maintaining personal property left by the faculty member. The university accepts no liability for lost, damaged, or destroyed personal property.

A departing faculty member may request permission to store personal property beyond the last day of employment. The following stipulations apply: the request to store personal property must be submitted prior to the last day of employment; such a request must be submitted to the department head, chair, school director, or authorized supervisor, and the department head, chair,

or school director, or authorized supervisor has absolute discretion in approving or denying the request.

### **2.23 Reduction in Force (RIF)**

Termination refers to the involuntary cessation of employment of a tenured or continued appointment faculty member or of a faculty member on a fixed-term appointment before the end of the term. Termination takes place only as dismissal for adequate cause or in the case of a reduction in force (RIF).

Furlough refers to the involuntary interruption of employment of a tenured or continued appointment faculty member or of a faculty member on a fixed-term appointment before the end of the term. This differs from termination in that it conveys an intention of the university to reappoint affected faculty members within some reasonable period if circumstances permit.

A reduction in force is the termination or interruption of employment of a member of the general faculty under conditions of financial exigency or program reduction. Reduction in personnel by attrition, freezes on new hiring, across-the-board reductions of salaries and/or teaching schedules, and the offering of incentives for early retirement, whether at the program level or institution-wide, are not considered reductions in force. Rather, they are lesser remedies that may be implemented before any reduction in force.

Denial of tenure to an untenured faculty member or non-renewal of appointment of an untenured faculty member on probationary appointment, or non-renewal of appointment of an untenured member of the administrative and professional faculty, where usual procedures have been affected in each instance, is not considered a termination within the meaning of this policy.

For the procedures outlined below, seniority refers to the number of years served at the university by a member of the general faculty in tenured, tenure-track, or functionally equivalent positions. Service need not be continuous to contribute to an individual's seniority. Years of service include those during which a faculty member is employed at least half-time. Years during which a faculty member is employed less than half-time will not count toward years of service for purposes of this section.

#### **2.23.1 Reduction in Force (RIF) Under Conditions of Financial Exigency**

Reductions in force (RIF) may occur when financial conditions disallow the usual operation of programs. While the university has a right to initiate reductions in force, including those affecting tenured faculty, it is the policy of the university (to the extent consistent with the degree of financial exigency) to ensure that the rights of tenure or continued appointment are preserved; to ensure that the integrity of the university and its programs is preserved; to protect the contractual expectations of untenured faculty; to provide that the burden of corrective action is shared by the various categories of personnel of the university, including all members of the general faculty; and to ensure that any reductions that do occur follow an orderly and predictable process.

A financial exigency is an imminent financial crisis that threatens the survival of the university and that cannot be alleviated by ordinary budgeting practices. Reductions in force in response to conditions of financial exigency are determined and implemented as follows:

**Declaration of a state of financial exigency.** Should the president determine that so extraordinary a circumstance has arisen or is anticipated that it might be necessary to terminate or interrupt the appointments of faculty members, the president may declare a state of exigency. Upon such declaration, the president forms an ad hoc committee to review the budgetary situation and the president's plan for addressing it.

**Committee review.** The ad hoc committee is comprised of no fewer than nine members, a majority of whom are faculty members nominated by the Faculty Senate. This includes at least one representative from each college. Where a RIF may affect the University Libraries or Extension faculty, at least one representative from that faculty should also be selected to serve on the committee. Any person who resigns from or otherwise discontinues service on the committee is replaced by a new member chosen in the same manner as was the individual being replaced, and such replacement members are so selected that each college and, where appropriate, the University Libraries or Extension faculty retain at least one representative. Within the constraints of time and circumstance, the committee reviews the proposal submitted by the president and any alternative remedies that are available and recommends to the president a plan of action that may incorporate reductions in force of the administrative and support staff as well as the general faculty. The committee is charged with protecting both academic freedom and, insofar as circumstances permit, the presumption of continuous employment that tenure or continued appointment bestows and considers the curricular needs and goals of the university as well and the effects of any anticipated actions on the future financial well-being of the institution.

**Determination of policy.** After receiving the recommendations of the ad hoc committee, the president determines the response of the university to the declared state of exigency. If the president's decision is substantially at variance with the recommendations of the committee with specific regard to the implementation of RIFs, the committee may, by majority vote, appeal the president's actions to the Board of Visitors. In all other matters, and in cases where the president's decision to carry out a reduction in force accords with the recommendations of the ad hoc committee, no such appeal is available. The ad hoc committee consults with the president and receives periodic reports until the state of exigency ends and the committee determines that the obligations of the university to furloughed or terminated faculty are met.

**Implementation.** Reductions in force are implemented either within specified programs or across the institution. Whenever a RIF is undertaken, it is guided by the following considerations. Insofar as circumstances permit, all temporary or part-time faculty members and those not holding tenured or tenure-track appointments or their functional equivalent are retained through the then-existing term of appointment. Insofar as circumstances permit, untenured faculty holding tenure-track appointments and University Libraries and other faculty holding probationary appointments are retained through the then-existing term of appointment. No tenure-track or functionally equivalent appointment is terminated or interrupted unless and until all appropriate temporary appointments are terminated. Where reductions in force of these personnel are required, they are implemented in ascending order of rank and of seniority within rank. Whenever possible, the university provides notice of furlough or termination equivalent to that for non-reappointment schedule as set forth in chapter two, "non-Reappointment." Except in the most extraordinary circumstances, all tenured faculty and those on continued appointment retain their positions. Where reductions in force of tenured or continued appointment personnel are required, they are



implemented in ascending order of rank and of seniority within rank. Whenever possible, the university provides at least one year's notice of furlough or termination.

**Notification.** The university provides written notification to all faculty affected by a RIF including: (a) a statement of the basis for its action, (b) a description of the manner in which the decision in question was reached, (c) a disclosure of the information and data on which the decision makers relied, (d) information regarding reappointment rights and process, and (e) information regarding procedures available for appealing the decision.

**Appeals.** The decision to furlough or terminate a member of the general faculty because of a reduction in force may be appealed in two ways. The affected individual may appeal through the grievance procedure specified in the relevant section of the Faculty Handbook. After consulting with the appropriate dean and an elected committee of faculty members from the affected program, the principal administrative officer of a program may appeal individual RIF decisions to the provost on programmatic grounds. Reductions in force of no more than one-quarter of the affected faculty in any program may be appealed in this manner.

**Replacement and Reappointment.** The university recognizes its obligation to reappoint personnel furloughed or terminated through a RIF insofar as circumstances permit within a reasonable period following such action. Accordingly, temporary personnel cannot replace a probationary term faculty member who has been furloughed or terminated through a reduction in force for a period of three years following that action. Similarly, temporary or probationary term personnel cannot replace a tenured or continued appointment faculty member who has been furloughed or terminated through a reduction in force for a period of five years following that action.

Rather, affected members of the general faculty are granted first refusal of re-established positions for which they are qualified, with positions offered in descending order of rank and seniority within rank whenever the number of qualified personnel exceeds the number of available positions. The university attempts to identify funds to extend to affected faculty during these periods of three and five years, respectively, all health insurance benefits for which they would otherwise have qualified. On reaching age 70, or on declining at least one offer of employment in a position equivalent in tenure status, salary, and teaching load (as adjusted to reflect post-RIF department or school changes) to that which was terminated, each faculty member affected by a reduction in force forfeits all protections afforded by this paragraph.

For the purpose of providing insurance benefits and implementing these reappointment procedures, the provost keeps the curriculum vitae and current address of each terminated or furloughed faculty member. Terminated or furloughed faculty have an obligation to maintain the accuracy and timeliness of these records; the failure to do so results in forfeiture of the protections afforded by this paragraph.

### **2.23.2 Reduction in Force (RIF) for Academic Program Restructuring or Discontinuance**

Ordinarily, changes to academic programs within the university are planned so that the appointments of faculty members are not compromised. Such changes are considered part of the

ongoing evolution of academic programs and are subject to the usual procedures established by the colleges, relevant commissions, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

However, when extraordinary circumstances require more rapid change, it may be necessary to restructure or discontinue programs or departments or schools in a way that leads to involuntary terminations or other alterations of appointments of faculty members with tenure or continued appointment. In such circumstances, the policy in this section applies.

Any decision to restructure or discontinue academic programs in a way that alters faculty appointments is a university-wide responsibility and should be made to support the educational mission of the university. In all such circumstances, early and meaningful faculty participation is essential and fundamental to the process outlined in this policy.

The restructuring or discontinuing of one or more academic programs with the potential to invoke this policy may be initiated by the provost or president, by the college deans, by the college faculties, or by an appropriately charged commission. If the provost determines that such restructuring or discontinuing of academic programs should be considered, a Steering Committee for Academic Restructuring, hereinafter referred to as the steering committee, is appointed as described below. The purpose of the steering committee is to evaluate and coordinate the proposed restructuring effort, and to ensure that the procedures in this section are followed.

The steering committee is composed of nine members determined jointly by the provost and the president of the Faculty Senate: two faculty members selected from the membership of the Commission on Faculty Affairs; two faculty members selected from the membership of the Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies; two faculty members selected from the membership of the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies; one faculty member selected from the University Advisory Council on Strategic Budgeting and Planning; one member selected from nominations by the Faculty Senate; and the provost, or an administrative designee.

The steering committee elects a chair by a vote of all members of the committee. The steering committee composition is intended to ensure that the expertise and perspectives of the relevant commissions are incorporated in the deliberations.

The provost initiates discussion of a proposed program restructuring or discontinuance with the steering committee, describing the need for the change, the proposed type and scope of restructuring effort, the educational rationale for the change, and an explanation of how it is consistent with the long-term goals of the university. If after these preliminary discussions and upon considering the advice of the steering committee, the provost decides to proceed, the provost prepares a more detailed proposal including identification of programs to be restructured or discontinued (or how they will be identified); timelines for development of specific plans by the affected programs and for the restructuring effort as a whole; and the estimated impact on the affected faculty, staff, and students, and on the university as a whole. If a budget reduction is involved, then reduction targets for any affected unit(s) must be included in the draft proposal.

The steering committee reviews the draft proposal and makes recommendations to the provost either to proceed with the proposal as written or with modifications, or to return it as insufficiently justified. The steering committee shares its recommendations with the university community.

The provost considers the steering committee's recommendations and makes every effort to develop a plan acceptable to the steering committee. If the provost decides to proceed, direction is given to the relevant dean(s) to prepare specific plans for the affected programs, based on guidelines in the following section. These plans identify which specific programs are to be reduced or eliminated; how the faculty, staff, and students will be affected; and how the rights, interests, and privileges of the faculty and staff members will be protected. If a budget reduction is involved, the specific plan must describe how the reduction targets will be met.

Under specific circumstances approved in advance by the provost and president, the Alternative Severance Option may be available to deans for meeting reduction targets.

The deans submit specific plans to the provost, who reconvenes the steering committee to oversee the review and comment process. All specific plans are made available to the university community for comment for a period of not less than three weeks. The relevant commissions (including the commissions on Staff Policies and Affairs and Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs if such employees are affected) are also asked to review and comment on the plans. The steering committee receives all comments and makes recommendations to the provost; these recommendations are also shared with the university community at large. The president and Board of Visitors have final authority to approve and implement all plans. Notification to affected faculty does not proceed until final approval is given.

**Guidelines for development of college plans:** The relevant deans should develop specific plans by involving the faculty at all levels of decision-making. Staff members should be involved as appropriate.

College-level planning for programmatic reductions follows the guidance and intent of the plan reviewed by the steering committee and approved by the provost. For developing specific plans, an academic program should meet one or more of the following criteria: (a) "program" as part of its title, (b) grants a degree or a credential, (c) has a sequence of courses with a common prefix, or (d) is identified as an academic program in official university documents. A program is generally smaller than a department or school and must be larger than the activities of a single faculty member.

If restructuring requires the termination of faculty members, then the following guidelines must be followed. When programs are identified for restructuring or discontinuance, all faculty assigned to the program, both tenured and untenured, are potentially subject to reassignment or termination. Within programs identified for restructuring or discontinuance, tenured faculty must not ordinarily be terminated before untenured faculty. Termination decisions within the tenured faculty as a group or within the untenured faculty as a group should be based on rank and merit. Faculty members on restricted or temporary appointments should be terminated before faculty members on regular appointments. The number of involuntary terminations of tenured faculty members should be minimized by providing incentives for resignation, retirement, or reassignment.

**Minimum responsibilities to individual faculty members.** The university recognizes its responsibility to faculty members if this policy is implemented. All plans to restructure academic programs guarantee the following to individual faculty members.

**Notice of termination.** Faculty members with tenure or continued appointment whose positions are eliminated as part of restructuring are given notice of not less than three years. Administrative and professional faculty members on regular appointments shall be given at least 90 days' notice. All other faculty members shall complete their current contracts or be given a one-year notice whichever is less. Notice of termination longer than the minimum specified above may be given to selected faculty members whose expertise is essential to closing out an academic program in which students are enrolled.

**Written notification.** After final approval has been given for specific plans, written notification is provided to all faculty members whose appointments will be terminated or altered. The notification shall include a statement of the basis for its action, a description of the way the decision was reached, a disclosure of the information and data on which the decision was based, and information regarding procedures available for appealing the decision.

**Transition assistance.** Every effort is made to place affected faculty members with tenure or continued appointment in available openings in the university or to reassign them to continuing programs. Transition assistance may include training to qualify for placement in a related field if desired and appropriate. Where placement in another position is not possible, the university provides appropriate and reasonable career transition assistance such as clerical support, communications, office space, and outplacement services.

**Reappointment.** In all cases of termination of appointment because of program reduction or discontinuance, the position of a faculty member with tenure or continued appointment cannot be filled by a replacement within a period of three years following separation unless the released faculty member was first offered reinstatement and a reasonable time in which to accept or decline.

**Appeals.** A faculty member whose appointment is terminated or altered due to program reduction or discontinuance may file a grievance as outlined in the relevant section of the Faculty Handbook. Grounds for appeal may be substantial failure to follow the procedures and standards set forth in this section. Because faculty members, through the steering committee, are involved in the review and development of recommendations guiding the restructuring or discontinuance, the determination of which programs or departments or schools are affected cannot be a basis for appeal.

## **2.24 Severance**

### **2.24.1 Transitional Severance Benefits**

See [Policy 4245 Severance Benefits Policy for University Employees](#). Transitional severance benefits shall be provided to eligible salaried university staff and salaried teaching and research and administrative/professional faculty employees on regular appointments, without regard to hire date, who are involuntarily separated due to budget reductions, agency reorganizations, or workforce downsizings, for reasons unrelated to performance or conduct.

### **2.24.2 Alternative Severance Option (ASO)**

Under specific circumstances approved in advance by the provost and president, an alternative severance option (ASO) may be available to eligible faculty. Severance of faculty members with tenure or continued appointment must be voluntary; no tenured faculty member can be required

to participate. Tenure-track and continued appointment-track faculty members are not eligible, nor are restricted employees.

The premise for any severance payment rests on the rationale of business necessity to reduce personnel expenses. When such a situation occurs, deans and senior managers will be asked to define the business operations, academic programs, departments, schools, or units where personnel reductions will occur. An approved business plan for each participating college or vice-presidential area will describe the specific units and eligibility criteria for participation in the ASO or layoff substitution process. These plans will necessarily differ. Some colleges and senior management areas do not offer the ASO as a means to reach their budget reduction targets. The identification of employees who receive this offer will be based on business need, and, therefore, it is possible not all employees who are eligible will be selected to participate. For example, more employees may apply than are needed to address the reductions and positions critical to business operations would be excluded. Eligible employees in units with approved business plans are notified if the option is available to them.

### **2.25 Non-Discrimination, Harassment Prevention, Sexual Assault**

Contact the [Office for Equity and Accessibility](#) for information. The university provides a workplace where all employees, students, visitors, and volunteers are treated with dignity and respect. [Policy 1025, "Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Assault"](#) affirms the university's commitment to prohibit discrimination and harassment at all levels and areas of university operations and programs. [Policy 1026, "Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment and Responsible Employee Reporting"](#) outlines processes for sexual assault and harassment.

As an academic community, Virginia Tech values the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and does not restrict the exercise of these rights. All members of the university community are responsible for respecting conditions that preserve the freedom to learn. Protected activities do not violate university policy unless they interfere with university functions, violate the rights of others, or otherwise break the law. The appropriate supervisor or administrator is responsible for addressing offensive behavior that does not violate the non-discrimination and harassment prevention policy.

It is also a violation of policy to retaliate against any party for participating in a discrimination and/or harassment investigation ("protected activity"). Retaliation includes any adverse treatment that is reasonably likely to deter the complainant or others from filing a charge of discrimination and/or harassment or participating in a discrimination and/or harassment investigation. Retaliation can be verbal, written, graphic, electronic, or physical.

**Consensual Relationships.** It should be understood by all members of the university community that consensual amorous or sexual relationships (hereinafter referred to as consensual relationships) that occur in the context of educational or employment supervision and evaluation present serious ethical concerns. Consensual relationships between faculty and students enrolled in their classes or students for whom they have professional responsibility as advisor or supervisor violate the policy on professional ethics and responsibilities and may be a violation of non-discrimination and/or harassment prevention policies. Similarly, consensual relationships between supervisors and employees they directly supervise violate university policy. Faculty

members or others performing instructional or academic advising duties and supervisors involved in consensual relationships must remove themselves from any activity or evaluation that may reward or penalize the affected student or employee.

Consensual relationships between faculty and students are particularly susceptible to exploitation. The respect and trust accorded a professor by a student, as well as the power exercised by the professor in giving praise or blame, grades, recommendations for further study and future employment, make voluntary consent by the student suspect, given the fundamentally asymmetric nature of the relationship.

Faculty and supervisors should be aware that engaging in consensual relationships with students or employees they supervise could make them liable for formal action. Even when both parties have consented to the development of such a relationship, it is the faculty member or supervisor who, by virtue of one's special responsibility, may be held accountable for unprofessional behavior. Complaints alleging discrimination and/or harassment, as defined above, may be filed by either party to the consensual relationship or by an aggrieved party outside the relationship.

**Responsible Employee Reporting.** University administrators, supervisors, and those performing instructional or academic advising duties have an added responsibility to create and maintain a work and learning environment free of discrimination and/or harassment.

If an administrator, supervisor, or individual with instructional responsibility becomes aware of an incident that might reasonably be construed as constituting discrimination and/or harassment, they must take immediate steps to address the matter. In such cases, the administrator, supervisor, or individual with instructional responsibility should promptly contact the Office for Equity and Accessibility to coordinate any further action that may be necessary.

Administrators, supervisors, and those with instructional responsibility should act whenever they learn, directly or indirectly, about discrimination and/or harassment. This obligation exists even if the complainant requests that no action be taken. It is not the responsibility of the complainant to correct the situation.

Administrators, supervisors, and those with instructional responsibility (for their respective teaching obligation) have the legal responsibility to protect a complainant from continued discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. They must also protect persons accused of discrimination and/or harassment from potential damage by false allegations.

Administrators and supervisors will be held accountable for dealing with and taking necessary steps to prevent discrimination and/or harassment.

Administrators and supervisors are responsible for informing employees and students under their supervision of this policy and providing the name and contact information of the person responsible for addressing harassment and/or discrimination complaints covered under [Policy 1025](#) and [Policy 1026](#).

For additional information and to file a discrimination or harassment complaint, including Title IX, contact the Associate Vice President for Equity and Accessibility, Virginia Tech, North End Center, 300 Turner St., Blacksburg, VA 24061, Phone 540-231-2010.

**Virginia Tech Police Department.** We encourage victims of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, and dating and domestic violence, to exercise their right to file a complaint with the Virginia Tech Police Department if the crime occurs on Virginia Tech's property, regardless of the status of the complainant. For crimes occurring away from Virginia Tech's property, victims may contact the local law enforcement in the appropriate jurisdiction.

## **2.26 Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention**

The university's commitment to preventing campus and workplace violence is specified in [Policy 5616, "Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention Policy."](#) The policy lists prohibited conduct and sanctions for any policy violations, and prohibits carrying, maintaining, or storing a firearm, ammunition, or weapon on any university facility and for all events on campus where people congregate in any public or outdoor areas, even if the owner has a valid permit, when it is not required by the individual's job or in accordance with the relevant university policies for student life. The policy also describes prevention, risk assessment, and response practices implemented, such as establishment of a Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention Committee, and a Threat Assessment Team, and appropriate procedures for incident reporting.

## **2.27 Safe Academic and Work Environment**

The university is committed to ensuring the safety and security of employees, students, visitors, and volunteers. Employees are responsible for compliance with environmental, health and safety laws and regulations and should make every effort to maintain a safe and healthy working environment. In the interest of promoting a safe and secure working, learning, and living environment for employees, students, and visitors, the university developed [Policy 5615, "University Safety and Security."](#) This policy prescribes a larger and institution-wide commitment to a safe and secure campus, establishes offices specifically charged with security and safety responsibilities, designates the Incident Leadership Team to provide general oversight and leadership for the university's security, safety, and violence prevention efforts, designates the University Safety and Security Committee as an advisory group on safety and security practices and concerns, and lists responsibilities for department head, chair, or school director, and individuals in supervisory roles.

## **2.28 Health and Safety**

[Policy 1005, "Health and Safety Policy,"](#) describes the university's commitment to a healthy and safe campus and documents roles and responsibilities to help prevent accidents, illnesses and injuries; increase safety awareness; meet requirements of environmental, occupational health, and safety laws and regulations; reduce institutional liability; and establish safety responsibilities for members of the university community and visitors to university-owned or occupied property. Consult [Virginia Tech Emergency Management](#) and see chapter thirteen of this handbook for information on Emergency Preparedness.

## **2.29 Virginia Tech Principles of Community**

The Virginia Tech Principles of Community state: Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our ongoing efforts

to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all its members:

- We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the university. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and military status.
- We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve).

### **2.30 Professional Responsibilities and Conduct**

Consult Virginia Tech statement of [Business Conduct Standards](#). All employees are expected to ensure that business activities are conducted properly and in compliance with federal and state laws. Procedures are on websites of the Controller's Office, Procurement Department, Human Resources, and in university policies.

Each employee contributes to the success of Virginia Tech by performing job responsibilities in accordance with university policies and procedures. The university's business standards provide a foundation of business practices to support the core missions of learning, discovery, and engagement.

#### **2.30.1 Policy on Misconduct in Research**

Consult chapter ten in this handbook, the [Research Integrity Office](#) in Research and Innovation, and the [Policy on Research Misconduct](#). The university endorses high ethical standards in conducting research to ensure public trust in the integrity of research results. The university recognizes that deception in research erodes the credibility of an institution and the confidence of those who might benefit from the research. The university takes all reasonable and practical steps to foster a research environment that promotes the responsible conduct of research and research training (and activities related to that research or research training), discourages research misconduct, and deals promptly with allegations or evidence of possible research misconduct.

#### **2.30.2 Statement of Principles of Ethical Behavior**

Consult the Faculty Senate [Committee on Faculty Ethics](#). The faculty of Virginia Tech believe that academic freedom is essential to attain our missions as scholars and teachers. We also recognize and accept the responsibilities attendant to academic freedom as fundamental to a scholarly community. We believe we must exercise our rights with due regard to the rights of others and we must meet our obligations fully as faculty members. We hold ourselves accountable to ensure that the faculty of Virginia Tech is recognized for its commitment and leadership to pursue



knowledge, to promote the free expression of ideas, to teach our students, and to serve the citizens of Virginia.

**Scholarship.** Guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, we recognize our primary responsibility to our disciplines is to seek and to state the truth. To this end, we devote our energies to developing and improving our scholarly competence. We accept the obligation to exercise critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge. We practice intellectual honesty and do not compromise our freedom of inquiry. At Virginia Tech, self-plagiarism is considered unethical behavior. Self-plagiarism occurs when authors reuse substantial parts of their own published work as new without providing appropriate references to the previous work if this reuse deviates materially from standard practice in the field.

**Students.** We encourage the free pursuit of learning in our students and exemplify the best scholarly and ethical standards of our disciplines. We value and promote differences among students and respect students as individuals and serve as their intellectual guides and counselors. We make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to assure that our evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. We respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professors and students. We avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students and acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from students. We do not engage in any romantic or sexual relationships with students whom we are in a position to evaluate by virtue of our teaching, research, or administrative responsibilities.

**Instruction.** We strive to be fair, compassionate, and effective teachers. We prepare classes adequately, present materials fairly, and make ourselves available to students for consultation and advice. We avoid bias and we respect diverse points of view.

**Colleagues.** We accept our obligations that derive from common membership in the faculty of Virginia Tech. We relate to colleagues and other university personnel in a responsible, professional, and civil manner, avoiding behaviors and actions that purposefully, consistently, and unnecessarily tend to disrupt, impede, harass, or abuse them in the performance of their assigned tasks and professional duties. We do not discriminate against colleagues, nor do we engage in romantic or sexual relationships with employees whom we are in a position to supervise or evaluate. We respect and defend free inquiry by all. In the exchange of criticisms and ideas, we show respect for the opinions of others, acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance, and strive to be open-minded and fair in our professional judgments. We accept our share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of Virginia Tech and take due care in the discharge of those responsibilities.

**University.** We seek above all to be effective in our assigned responsibilities. We give paramount importance to these responsibilities in determining the amount and character of work done outside of Virginia Tech. Although we observe the Faculty Handbook, we maintain our right to criticize and seek revision of university policy.

**Community.** As members of the larger community, we have the same rights and obligations as other citizens. We measure the importance of these rights and obligations in light of our

responsibilities to our disciplines, to our professions, to our students, and to Virginia Tech. When we speak or act as private persons, we avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for Virginia Tech. As citizens engaged in a profession that depends upon freedom for its welfare and integrity, we have a particular obligation to promote conditions of free inquiry and of further public understanding of academic freedom.

### **2.30.3 Allegations of Unprofessional or Unethical Conduct**

The Faculty Senate Committee on Ethics receives, investigates, and considers allegations of unprofessional or unethical conduct for all types of faculty members, except administrative and professional faculty members. If the committee finds a serious breach of ethical conduct that leads to a recommendation for a severe sanction or dismissal for cause, the procedures for “Imposition of a Severe Sanction or Dismissal for Cause,” are followed in implementing such sanctions as described in the relevant chapter of this handbook.

#### **2.30.3.1 Allegations of Unprofessional or Unethical Conduct against an A/P faculty member**

When the allegation is against an administrative or professional (A/P) faculty member without tenure or continued appointment, a special panel of five administrative and/or professional faculty members is selected to review the charges and hear the case, if appropriate. The vice president of the A/P Senate chooses panel members from among the A/P faculty at large. The A/P Senate vice president may invite an experienced member of the Faculty Senate Committee on Ethics to serve as a non-voting member of the panel. All potential members must disclose possible conflicts of interest concerning their participation in the case.

### **2.31 Faculty Senate Standing Committees on Ethics, Reconciliation, and Review**

External Faculty Senate Standing Committees report to the vice president of the senate and are summarized in the Faculty Senate Constitution. See [Faculty Senate website](#) for information.

#### **2.31.1 Faculty Senate Committee on Ethics**

The [Committee on Faculty Ethics](#) receives and considers charges of violations of faculty ethics that involve the abuse of professional responsibilities as outlined in the principles of ethical behavior as prescribed in the Faculty Handbook. It is the venue for the examination of possible violations of the standards for research, teaching, and appropriate behavior with colleagues and students that do not cross legal thresholds, such as behavior that is offensive but does not meet the standard for discrimination/harassment. The committee has an investigatory and reporting role.

#### **2.31.2 Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation**

The [Committee on Reconciliation](#) offers advice and counsel to faculty members who seek it, particularly in relation to disputes with immediate supervisors or university administrators. The committee has a designated role within the grievance process to assist in resolving disputes that are eligible for consideration as a grievance if so requested by the faculty member, and can help facilitate conversations between faculty members and their supervisors with the goal of reaching mutually agreeable solutions. Faculty members may also consult the committee regarding serious disagreements with immediate supervisors or other university administrators over issues that are not eligible for consideration within the grievance process. In contrast to the Faculty Review Committee, the Committee on Reconciliation operates informally as a facilitator, similar to the

University Ombuds Office. It meets with the respective parties to determine if there is common ground for resolution of the matter, facilitating a solution that is agreeable to the principal parties and consistent with university policy and practice. Contact [Faculty Affairs in the provost's office for information on Reconciliation.](#)

### **2.31.3 Faculty Senate Review Committee**

The [Faculty Review Committee](#) oversees the movement of grievances through the grievance process as prescribed in the Faculty Handbook's grievance process, provides faculty review of faculty grievances that are not resolved at the college level, and considers appeals in the promotion and tenure or continued appointment process when the provost does not concur with a positive recommendation from the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure or the University Committee on Promotion and Continued Appointment. The committee has an investigatory and reporting role.

### **2.32 Political Activities**

Candidacy for political office, political service on county and state commissions, and active participation in political campaigns are recognized as individual freedoms of each faculty member. The only restriction placed upon such activities is that they do not interfere with the faculty member's academic responsibilities. Faculty members must take care to ensure that their positions in the university are kept separate from their political activities; it must be clear that they act as citizens in such activities, not as representatives of the university. The university encourages interest in civic affairs. However, neither political nor community activities are considered in the annual merit evaluation of a faculty member. If income is obtained for such activities, approval must be first obtained under consulting policies.

### **2.33 Consulting Activities**

Consult the [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment webpage](#) for information. The university recognizes that consulting work for external entities enhances the professional development of faculty members and provides channels for communication and outreach not otherwise available. This policy differentiates between external consulting and professional service.

**External consulting** is a professional activity related to an individual's area of expertise, where that individual generally receives compensation from a third party and is not acting as an agent of the university. Consulting may take many forms, but the guiding principle is that, in consulting, a person agrees to use their professional capabilities to further the agenda of a third party in return for an immediate or prospective gain. Even in cases without compensation, advance approval is required to document the proposed external activities and to ensure they do not constitute a conflict of commitment, or a conflict of interest where gifts of equipment or donations to the faculty member's laboratory may substitute for direct compensation. Provisions of the consulting policy also apply to external activities where the faculty member has a direct relationship to the external entity, such as personal or family ownership of the company. Consulting does not involve becoming an employee of the external entity.

**Professional service** includes service on national commissions, on boards of governmental agencies, on granting agency peer review panels, on visiting committees or advisory groups to other universities, on professional associations, and on analogous bodies. Professional service activities may involve a token honorarium and/or expense reimbursement. These activities are

considered part of the faculty member's institutional responsibilities for participation in the larger scholarly academic community. Participation in external professional service activities may require supervisor approval depending on departmental or school practice and expectations of the position. Annual leave is not required.

Consulting arrangements may be entered into by faculty members during periods of university employment provided that such advice is not part of their usual responsibility to the university and is not usually provided through Virginia Cooperative Extension, outreach programs, or other component of the university; the work undertaken contributes to their professional development; the work can be accomplished without interference with their assigned duties and does not ordinarily involve more than one day per week and does not exceed five days in any five-week period; university resources and facilities are not involved (except as described in [Policy 5000, "University Facilities Usage and Events,"](#) and in chapter two, "Use of University Facilities").

All consulting activities, including those that do not exceed five days in any five-week period, must be documented and approved in writing in advance of the consulting activities. Approval is granted by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor, and the dean, vice president, or senior management area as appropriate.

Faculty members must disclose and receive approval for all consulting activities including activities that occur within the one-day per week through five-days per five-week period. Department head, chair, school director, or supervisor approval is documented using the [Disclosure and Management System](#) on the website of the Office of Research and Innovation.

Faculty members whose appointments are funded in whole or in part by sponsored projects may participate in consulting when consistent with their responsibilities and in compliance with federal contract compliance and state regulations. University time available for consulting is in proportion to base salary funding from non-sponsored sources. With supervisor approval, additional consulting days may be charged to annual leave.

Consulting work should involve advisory services based on a faculty member's store of knowledge and experience in contrast to programs of research, development, or testing, which may interfere with the performance of the faculty member's duties or conflict with university interests.

In any faculty consulting arrangement, the name of the university must not be used in connection with any product or service developed as a result of such consulting nor in any connection arising out of the arrangement.

Paid consulting by faculty members is not permitted for work done for a group within the university. For example, if a faculty member advises or assists the principal investigator on a grant, there shall be no pay for the services. Such consulting is considered part of the usual duties of faculty members. Faculty members may be paid for participation in non-credit instruction or professional development offered through appropriate university units, in accordance with overload payment policies in the Faculty Handbook.

When a faculty member testifies as an expert witness, the following conditions apply: a disclaimer is given in court indicating that the faculty member is speaking as a professional and not as a representative of the university; when a faculty member is under subpoena, the university civil

leave policies apply; and a faculty member may not testify in civil suits involving the Commonwealth of Virginia, except under subpoena.

Consult [Policy 5000, “University Facilities Usage and Event Approval”](#) for information. Except under the provisions specified in that policy, faculty members are not allowed to use university resources in conjunction with consulting or otherwise for private gain. This includes the parallel use of university facilities associated with consulting activities, i.e., when a faculty member is engaged in authorized consulting activities, the consulting employer may not enter into an agreement to use university resources for any purpose related to the consulting activity. Instead, when significant resources of the university are required, the employer may request that an agreement, grant, or contract be drawn up with the university that provides the necessary services, including Human Resources. The faculty member carries out the duties of the agreement as part of their assigned university duties. Because University Libraries facilities are made available to the public, their use in consulting is not regarded as being in contravention of this policy.

Because of the university’s land-grant mission, it may be in the best interest of the university to impose some additional restrictions on the consulting activity of the faculty of one or more of the colleges. Therefore, an academic dean, after consulting with their faculty, may recommend to the provost that the faculty of that college need to satisfy additional requirements for consulting approval. The provost, after consulting with the Commission on Faculty Affairs, and with the approval of the president and the Board of Visitors, may require that the faculty of the affected college satisfy such additional requirements.

Oversight of faculty consulting is a responsibility of the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and other relevant administrative officers of the university so that a reasonable and appropriate level of external activities is maintained, by the faculty member and usual duties are not neglected.

A consulting request must be approved by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and dean and submitted through the Disclosure and Management System available on the webpage maintained by the Office of Research and Innovation.

Approval of consulting or other external activities for faculty members holding nine-month appointments is not necessary during the summer unless there is concern about conflict of interest, or the university employs the faculty member during the consulting period. When the university employs the faculty member in the summer months, university and college consulting policies apply.

Setting the consulting fee is the prerogative of the faculty member. The actual or estimated consulting income is reported on the request form to allow reviewers a full assessment of potential financial conflict of interest. Income received for consulting work is not considered when faculty members are evaluated for annual merit salary increases.

### **2.33.1 Consulting Activities for Virginia Cooperative Extension Faculty**

See chapter seven of this handbook for additional information applicable to Extension faculty members. Consistent with the university’s policy and procedures on consulting activities additional

restrictions may be imposed on the consulting activity of Virginia Cooperative Extension faculty members. These restrictions are imposed to give further assurance that consulting approval is not granted for assistance, that is the usual responsibility of faculty members within Extension.

### **2.33.2 Virginia Tech Continuing and Professional Education Technical Assistance Program (TAP)**

Consult Continuing and Professional Education, [Technical Assistance Program \(TAP\)](#) for information. Consulting agreements may be negotiated by the individual faculty member and the sponsoring organization, not involving university participation in any way, or they may be negotiated as part of a technical assistance agreement through the university. The technical assistance program was created as part of the university's outreach mission to respond to requests from business and industry for the application of knowledge to a specific process-related or technical situation.

Proposals for technical assistance are small scale (generally less than \$25,000), short-term, require a rapid response, and do not involve the generation of new knowledge or the development of intellectual property. (Projects involving the generation of knowledge and/or faculty buyouts must be handled as sponsored projects.) Continuing and Professional Education negotiates and administers contracts for technical assistance.

Technical assistance contracts typically identify the faculty member who will provide the needed expertise, the amount of time to be devoted to the project, the scope and estimated cost of the work, timelines for the consulting or project, and any required deliverables.

Payment to the faculty member for such consulting is negotiable and provided through university payroll. Faculty earnings for technical assistance agreements must be within the overall limitation of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of annual income during the academic year for nine-month faculty members; summer earnings from all university sources are also capped at an additional 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % for academic year faculty members. Faculty members on calendar year appointments may earn 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of annual income during the fiscal year. The earnings limitation is for payments from all university sources, including approved non-credit Continuing and Professional Education activities. Similarly, total time involved in technical assistance, other approved consulting, and non-credit teaching must be within the constraints of this policy.

For further information on technical assistance agreements, contact Continuing and Professional Education. A technical assistance agreement, completed and approved by the department head, chair, or school director, or supervisor and dean, substitutes for approval of a Request to Engage in External Activity Form 13010 usually required for approval of consulting.

### **2.34 Outside Employment and External Activities other than Consulting**

Prior approval of the supervisor and relevant university official is required for outside employment that does not meet the definition or intent of the consulting policy. Approval is contingent on assurance that the primary commitment to Virginia Tech will be fulfilled and that the proposed employment does not constitute a conflict of interest. Release time from university work is not usually available for paid activities that are primarily personal in nature, do not enhance the faculty member's professional skills, or that are not a potential benefit to the university. The faculty

member must use pre-approved leave, or leave without pay, in cases where outside personal work creates a potential conflict with university responsibilities.

### **2.35 Conflicts of Commitment**

Consult the [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment](#) webpage for information and procedures. A conflict of commitment arises when the external activities of a faculty member are so demanding of time, attention, or focus that they interfere with the individual's responsibilities to the university.

Nothing in this policy statement shall be interpreted as interfering with the academic freedom of faculty members, nor with their primary responsibility to direct their own research.

Faculty members have traditionally been allowed wide latitude in defining their professional agendas and their degree of involvement in external activities when those activities advance the mission or prestige of the university. The university encourages active participation by faculty members in external activities that are integral to and/or enhance their professional skills and standing or that constitute substantive outreach and public service activities.

Such activities are usually expected of faculty members to promote academic development, and to enrich their contributions to the institution, their profession, the state, and national and world societies. Additionally, Virginia Tech encourages entrepreneurial activities by faculty, recognizing that such activities are critical to promoting economic development and meeting society's needs, if participation in those activities complies with federal and state laws and policies, the Virginia Tech conflicts of interest policy, and these guidelines.

Faculty members should make the fulfillment of their responsibilities to the university the focal point of their professional effort. They are expected to arrange their external activities so that they do not impede or compromise their university duties and responsibilities. Responsibility for ensuring commitment to the university and for reporting activities that might be perceived as compromising that commitment rests with each faculty member in consultation with the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and dean, or relevant senior manager.

The university recognizes that the balance of external activities varies among individuals, from discipline to discipline, and from one type of proposed activity to another. That balance is affected by unit goals and changing needs for teaching, research, creative and artistic activities, Extension, service, and outreach. Primary duties and responsibilities may vary from year to year for individual faculty members. Undergraduate and graduate enrollment demands, faculty-staffing levels, and changes in the nature and scope of outreach, teaching, and research within the unit may affect the primary duties and responsibilities of individual faculty. The primary judgment as to whether a faculty member is meeting professional responsibilities to the unit rests with the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and dean, or relevant senior manager.

If a faculty member is committed to engaging in an external activity that compromises their ability to meet university responsibilities, a leave of absence or a reduction in their percentage of employment may be appropriate or necessary. Approval of a leave request or change in appointment depends on the needs of the unit and college and protection of university interests.

If a department head, chair, school director and/or dean, observes that a faculty member appears to not be fulfilling their primary responsibilities to the university, the administrator shall immediately

address these concerns with the faculty member to ensure that these responsibilities are adequately met. Failure to meet primary departmental or school and university obligations is handled through established university procedures appropriate to the situation (for example, formal reprimand, non-reappointment, post-tenure review, or dismissal for cause).

### **2.36 Conflicts of Interest**

Consult the [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment](#) page and [Policy 13010, “Conflict of Interest”](#) for information. A conflict of interest describes a situation in which an individual’s professional judgment is at risk of being biased by a secondary interest, resulting in possible harm or the implication of personal gain. Having a COI does not mean the person is biased or has done something wrong – the term refers to the risk of bias, whether or not bias or harm have actually occurred. A COI assessment is a factual evaluation based on the existence of certain parameters that could lead to biased judgement or inappropriate personal gain in university operations such as research, contracting, or purchasing. State law and federal research regulations allow for certain conflicts of interest when specified conditions are met, as outlined in this policy.

Virginia Tech recognizes the value and necessity of engaging with external entities to translate research into beneficial products. Transparency and appropriate oversight of relationships with external entities promotes and safeguards the interests and reputation of Virginia Tech and its employees. Transparency and appropriate oversight also assure research sponsors, participants, and the broader public that possible personal gain has not influenced or biased research or decision-making around other university activities.

[Policy 13010 “Conflict of Interest”](#) summarizes professional conduct standards that relate to objectivity and provides the basic framework for disclosing financial interests to ensure university-wide compliance with COI directives. It also establishes standards that provide a reasonable expectation that the design, conduct, and reporting of research will be free from bias resulting from an Investigator’s financial conflict of interest (FCOI).

Because financial interests might stem from an additional commitment other than one’s Virginia Tech employment, this policy must be read in conjunction with section 2.22 Consulting Activities, and section 2.24 Outside Employment and External Activities Other than Consulting, and [Policy 4070, Additional/Outside Employment Policy for Salaried Classified and University Staff.”](#)

Policy 13010 Conflicts of Interest primarily focuses on the disclosure of financial interests, conflicts of interest can be present in many aspects of university business; therefore, this policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies related to professional conduct standards and objectivity, including the university’s Statement of Business Conduct Standards. All employees must acknowledge receipt and agree to adhere to the standards in accordance with established university policies and procedures. See the [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment webpage](#) maintained by the Research Conflict of Interest Program for a list of other Virginia Tech policies that touch on conflicts of interest more broadly.

#### **2.36.1 Conflicts of Interest Involving Spouses, Immediate Family Members**

As a matter of state law, employees must avoid being in a position of authority over a spouse or a member of the immediate family who is also employed by the university where the spouse or family member earns \$5,000 or more during a fiscal year. An employee and their spouse or



another member of the immediate family may both be employed by the university so long as the employee does not exercise any control over the employment conditions and activities (such as initial appointment, retention, promotion, tenure, salary, travel approval, leave of absence, or grievance review) of the spouse or immediate family member and is not in a position to influence those activities. Proposed exceptions and alternate reporting relationships are reviewed and approved by the provost (or relevant vice president for a non-academic appointment) prior to submission to the Board of Visitors for approval.

### **2.36.2 Conflicts of Interest Training and Disclosure Requirements for All Employees**

As outlined in [Policy 13010](#) employees must disclose to Virginia Tech when they or an immediate family member have a financial interest in a contract, a transaction, such as a purchase, or sponsored project to which Virginia Tech is a party prior to the time at which the contract is entered into. This is an employee-initiated disclosure.

### **2.36.3 Conflicts of Interest Training and Disclosure Requirements for Certain Employees**

[Chapter 31 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia](#) outlines the Commonwealth's State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (the Act). Disclosure to the Commonwealth is required by Virginia Tech employees when they 1) are designated by Human Resources as being in a position of trust, or 2) have an approved exception for a financial interest in a business that is party to a contract/transaction with Virginia Tech. Disclosure is required annually on the form prescribed by the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council. See [Policy 13010](#) and the Act for additional information.

[Chapter 31 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia](#) outlines the Commonwealth's State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (the Act) requires that certain Virginia Tech employees must take training and disclose financial interests to the Commonwealth of Virginia that they or an immediate family member hold. Training for Statement of Economic Interests (SOEI) filers is provided by the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council and is required initially and every two years. Note that this requirement is in addition to the Virginia Tech-specific COI training required for Investigators on sponsored research projects. SOEI filers must continue to disclose financial interests to Virginia Tech and take research COI training, as needed.

Disclosure to the Commonwealth of Virginia is required by Virginia Tech for certain employees or when they have an approved exception for a financial interest in a business that is a party to a contract/transaction with Virginia Tech.

### **2.36.4 Conflicts of Interest Training and Disclosure Requirements for Research Investigators**

Investigators on sponsored research projects must disclose financial interests at the time of proposal submission and throughout the life of the award, as outlined in Policy 13010 for the university, through its designated institutional official, to identify and manage financial conflicts of interest to promote objectivity in research. The director of the Research Conflict of Interest Program (or designee) is the designated institutional official responsible for making financial conflicts of interest determinations.

Section 3.2.2.2 of [Policy 13010](#) outlines Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) Management to Promote Objectivity in Research. If the designated institutional official determines that an FCOI exists, they will develop a plan for managing the FCOI that must be adopted prior to the start of the research. If an FCOI is determined to exist when the research is ongoing, sponsored project funding might be frozen until a management plan is accepted by the Investigator. The designated institutional official will develop the management plan based on state and federal requirements and input from the MPAC, the Investigator with an FCOI, and other relevant stakeholders, as needed. The management plan is designed to mitigate the conflict, promote research objectivity, and provide academic and professional protection of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, respectively. Mitigations will be based on a risk assessment of the COI scenario.

### **2.36.5 Training on Disclosures for Research Investigators**

Investigators must complete research COI training before engaging in sponsored research, at least every four years. Although the four-year training requirement is Public Health Service (PHS)-specific, Virginia Tech applies the same disclosure and management principles to all Investigators engaged in sponsored research, regardless of sponsor; therefore, the training requirement applies to all Investigators on sponsored research projects. Investigators will be notified when their training requirement is due.

### **2.36.6 Participation of and Payment to Students in Projects Involving Faculty Owners**

[Policy 13010](#) outlines Financial Conflict of Interest Management to Promote Objectivity in Research. The management plan is designed to mitigate the conflict, promote research objectivity, and provide academic and professional protection for graduate and professional students, and postdoctoral scholars respectively. See also the [Graduate Catalog](#) for information for graduate students seeking employment in university employee-owned businesses.

## **2.37 Workplace Policies**

The following are summaries of selected, frequently referenced university policies and procedures pertaining to faculty. These summaries are intended to notify the reader of the existence of a formal policy and where to locate more information. The university policy library is the official repository of university policies.

### **2.37.1 Indemnity**

All university employees, while acting within the course and scope of their employment, are covered by the commonwealth's insurance plan, and will be defended by the Office of the Attorney General in actions brought against them. Questions concerning any specific situation should be addressed to the Office of the University Legal Counsel.

### **2.37.2 Standards for Acceptable Use of Information Systems and Digital Media Communications Tools**

Consult [Policy 7000, "Acceptable Use and Administration of Computer and Communication Systems"](#) governs acceptable use of information systems at Virginia Tech. University employees may not use university systems for partisan political purposes including the use of electronic mail to circulate advertising for political candidates.

Access to computer systems and networks owned or operated by Virginia Tech imposes certain responsibilities and obligations and is granted subject to university policies, and local, state, and federal laws. Acceptable use is always ethical, reflects academic honesty, and shows restraint in the consumption of shared resources. It demonstrates respect for intellectual property, ownership of data, system security mechanisms, and individuals' rights to privacy and to freedom from intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance.

Policy 7000 applies to the use of any computing or communications device, regardless of ownership, while connected to the university network, and the use of any information technology services provided by or through the university. Every user of these systems and services is expected to know and follow this policy. Refer to Acceptable Use of Information Systems at Virginia Tech that details what are acceptable and not acceptable use of university resources. In making acceptable use of resources, you must NOT, if you are an employee, use University systems for partisan political purposes, such as using electronic mail to circulate advertising for political candidates."

University entities or individuals may, as needed, use digital communication tools to communicate with groups of university constituents on matters of official university business that require immediate notification or that are of a sufficient level of importance to warrant special attention. Any such group communications to employees, students, or others must be compliant with all regulations and university policies and should be limited to those matters that affect the majority of the defined group. Text messaging may be used but must not be the sole means of communicating an essential message or announcement. The text message must be supplemented by some other means of communication, e.g. an email or paper notice to ensure that all intended recipients, including those without a mobile phone, receive the message.

### **2.37.3 Privacy of Electronic Communications**

[Department of Human Resource Management Policy 1.75 of the Commonwealth of Virginia](#) states, "no user shall have any expectation of privacy in any message, file, image or data created, sent, retrieved, received, or posted in the use of the commonwealth's equipment and/or access." [Policy 7035, "Privacy Policy for Employees' Electronic Communications,"](#) defines the balance between the university's business needs and respect for employees' freedom of inquiry. The policy guides the actions of managers in certain situations and clarifies expectations for all employees about when and how the university may access employees' communications.

Virginia Tech requires all employees to obey applicable policies and laws in the use of any computing device, regardless of ownership, while connected to the university network. (See [Policy 7010, "Policy for Securing Technology Resources and Services."](#))

The university does not routinely monitor or access the content of electronic communications, computer files, or voicemail of its employees, whether stored on university equipment or in transit on the university network. Content of employees' electronic communications or files are not accessed during the execution of routine systems support, network performance, and related security functions.

However, monitoring or access may be necessary under certain circumstances. Legal or administrative circumstances where monitoring and/or access may occur without further

authorization are communications or files required to be released by law, by orders of a court, or requested in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; approved internal audit reviews; resolution of technical problems, emergency situations involving an imminent threat of irreparable harm to persons or property; and resources assigned to a group or publicly available to any user.

#### **2.37.4 Social Media**

Virginia Tech recognizes the value of social media platforms for a range of goals and must balance its support of social media with the preservation of Virginia Tech’s brand identity, integrity, and reputation. The university authorizes the creation and use of university social media accounts, provided their use is professional, protects the reputation and brand of the university, aligns with university priorities, and complies with other Virginia Tech policies and applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and is guided by the Virginia Tech Principles of Community. [Policy 1030, “Social Media Policy”](#), outlines the obligations, processes, and procedures for the use of social media.

#### **2.37.5 Crowdfunding**

Generally, crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or campaign by soliciting relatively small donations of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet. The university’s crowdfunding webpage provides crowdfunding guidelines, including the application process, best practices, and team roles and responsibilities. [Policy 12100, “Policy on Coordination of Private Fundraising”](#) provides guidance on using crowdfunding.

#### **2.37.6 Stewardship of Resources and Internal Controls**

It is the university’s policy to maintain a robust system of internal controls in order to safeguard assets, identify and correct errors and irregularities in the financial records on a timely basis, and to enhance compliance with university policies and procedures and applicable laws and regulations. The establishment, maintenance, and evaluation of an organization’s system of internal controls is the responsibility of management and creates the foundation for sound business practices within an ethical environment. It is also university policy to assess the effectiveness of the system of internal controls through periodic reviews by management and the services of external and internal auditors.

[Policy 3010, “Internal Controls”](#) applies to all university faculty, staff, and wage employees, hereafter referred to as “employees.” All university employees play a key role in ensuring that the high standards of business and ethical practices and the good stewardship of university resources are adopted in the performance of their duties at Virginia Tech. The establishment of strong internal controls echoes the principles of professional and personal integrity found in the university’s Statement of Business Conduct Standards which requires all employees to be fair, ethical, and honest in all internal and external business dealings and to comply with university policies and procedures and applicable laws and regulations.

#### **2.37.7 Use of University Facilities**

Consult [Policy 5000 “University Facilities Usage and Events Approval”](#) and [Policy 6362 “Policy on Continuing and Professional Education.”](#)

The facilities of the university are intended for the use of its faculty, staff, students, and invited guests participating in university-approved programs and activities, sponsored by or under the direction of the university or one of its related agencies or approved organizations, or by other organizations outside the university. Refer to [Policy 5000, “University Facilities Usage and Events Approval”](#), for further guidance regarding approved uses of university facilities. [Policy 6362, “Policy on Continuing and Professional Education”](#), requires that academic colleges, centers, and administrative units designing and delivering continuing and professional educational activities, both on- and off-campus, under the auspices of the Virginia Tech brand must work through Continuing and Professional Education. This includes work conducted by faculty in Blacksburg, as well as faculty delivering continuing education programs at university locations outside Blacksburg. Alternate arrangements may be made in the case of lack of availability of appropriate space or mutual agreement between the sponsoring university entity and Continuing and Professional Education.

University facilities are to be used in a manner consistent with their intended purpose. Priority of use is given to those activities related to the mission of the university. The facilities must be used in a safe, professional manner so as not to endanger the university community or the general public. The university may restrict access to land and buildings to protect individuals, property, and equipment.

The vice president for campus planning, infrastructure, and facilities is responsible for implementing policies and procedures about university facilities, including academic buildings.

Requests for use of rooms in The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center are submitted to The Inn’s space reservationist. Requests for use of the residence halls follow procedures outlined in [Policy 5010 “Residential Camps, Conferences, and Workshops.”](#)

Faculty and staff are not allowed to use university resources for private gain. However, under the following conditions, the compensated use of specialized facilities or equipment is allowed in support of approved consulting activities:

The facility or equipment must have a charge rate, established by the Controller’s Office, which reflects all direct and indirect costs associated with the use of the facility or equipment and applies to use by parties outside the university. The charge rate is applied to the actual use.

A Request to Engage in Outside Activities must be filed with the [Online Disclosure and Management System](#) specifying the facility or equipment to be used and estimating, in time or charges, the extent of the proposed use. The director, department head, chair, school director, or supervisor of the department or school responsible for the facility or equipment verifies, on the Request to Engage in External Activity Form 13010A, that the proposed use does not interfere with, or have priority over, anticipated university use of the facility or equipment.

In approving the Request to Engage in Outside Activities, the faculty member’s department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and dean or vice president (and provost, when appropriate) determine that the consultation is of substantial professional merit and presents no conflict of interest in the use of the facilities or equipment. Particular care is given to the relationship of the

consultation with current or potential grants or contracts and to the possibility of unfair competition with local firms and businesses.

If an employee uses equipment of a specialized service center, the employee is charged the “commercial” or “consulting” rate, as determined by the Controller’s Office. The employee is billed based on actual use. The deposit is credited to the appropriate service center account established by the Controller’s Office.

If the faculty member uses facilities such as those of the Virginia Tech athletic department, Moss Arts Center, or Student Engagement and Campus Life venues, the employee is charged at a rate established by the Controller’s Office for such use. The deposit is made to the appropriate venue account.

For facilities other than specialized service centers, or other facilities for which a charge rate has been determined, the use of the facilities must be authorized and reimbursed at a rate determined by the collaboration of the employee’s department head, chair, school director, or supervisor and the Controller’s Office.

The use of University Libraries facilities in connection with consulting is exempt from the above regulations since those facilities are available to the public.

#### **2.37.7.1 University Space Management**

[Policy 5400, “University Space Management”](#), which describes the formal decision-making and allocation approach to university space management, including all space and land owned or leased by the university. Through this formalized process, the university has the authority and responsibility to allocate space to specific users through organizational hierarches for certain periods of time, to review those allocations periodically, to assess their utilization, and to reallocate as needed to support the university’s strategic goals. The policy provides principles that govern the distribution of classroom and lab space scheduling and applicable roles and responsibilities.

#### **2.37.8 Operation of Autonomous Aircraft**

Proper operation of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) on campus and procedures for reporting any incidents is regulated in [Policy 5820, “Operation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\)”](#). The Policy governs (i) the operation of UAS on or over University Facilities, which include the university campus and property owned, rented, leased, and controlled by the university, (ii) the operation of university-owned UAS, and (iii) the operation of UAS by university personnel for university.

#### **2.37.9 Domestic and International Travel**

Consult the website of the Controller’s Office for information. The university encourages faculty to pursue endeavors that will enhance their professional development and benefit university programs. For details on travel-related business expenses and travel reporting procedures, refer to [Controller’s Office Procedures 20335A: Travel Overview](#). Consult [Policy 1070 “Global Travel Policy”](#). The university strongly encourages all members of the university community who are contemplating travel abroad for education, research, or other purposes to plan well in advance and to take precautions to ensure a safe trip.

### **2.37.10 Use of University Letterhead**

As a primary identifier of the university, letterhead should only be used for appropriate university business. As such, university letterhead is not to be used for personal business or where personal gain results. Avoid endorsements of political personages, businesses, or products when using university letterhead. Discretion is advised if correspondence on university letterhead could be construed as a university endorsement.

## CHAPTER THREE - TENURE-TRACK AND TENURED FACULTY

### 3.0 Policies for Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty

#### 3.1 Faculty Ranks

##### 3.1.1 Assistant Professor

An assistant professor is assigned teaching undergraduate courses and may be assigned responsibility for teaching graduate courses, supervising master's theses, and dissertations, and may serve on graduate student committees. The terminal degree appropriate to the field is expected for appointment to this rank.

##### 3.1.2 Associate Professor

In addition to the requirements for assistant professor, a person appointed as an associate professor must have demonstrated substantial professional achievements evidenced by an appropriate combination of outstanding teaching, creative scholarship, and recognized performance in Extension, outreach, University Libraries, or related academic and professional service.

##### 3.1.3 Professor

In addition to the requirements for associate professor, appointment to the rank of professor is contingent upon national or international recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator.

#### 3.2 Honored Faculty Appointments

##### 3.2.1 Endowed Chairs, Professorships, and Fellowships

Consult "[Endowed Chairs, Professorships, and Fellowships](#)" on the executive vice president and provost's (provost) Faculty Affairs webpage. Each college has formal procedures for the nomination and appointment of faculty members to endowed chairs, professorships, and fellowships that include review by a college honorifics committee or promotion and tenure committee.

After review by the appropriate college committee, the dean makes recommendations to the provost for approval by the Board of Visitors. Such an appointment may continue through the active career of the professor at the university, unless it is relinquished in favor of some other honored or administrative appointment, or unless the appointment has specific term limitations regarding renewal.

The university Faculty Honorifics Committee reviews nominations of Extension and Libraries faculty to endowed chairs, professorships, and fellowships.

A donor may establish an endowed chair, professorship, or fellowship, by providing an endowment to support the salary and/or operating funds of the professor. Funding levels determine whether the endowed position is a chair, professorship, or fellowship. Contact the Virginia Tech Foundation for further information regarding the establishment of an endowment.



### 3.2.2 Alumni Distinguished Professor

Consult "[Distinguished Professorships](#)" on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage.

**General conditions and definitions.** The Alumni Distinguished Professorship (ADP) is a preeminent faculty appointment, reserved by the Board of Visitors for recognition of faculty members who demonstrate extraordinary accomplishments and academic citizenship through substantive scholarly contributions across all three of Virginia Tech's mission areas of teaching, research, creative activity, and engagement. The provost, in consultation with the president and the Alumni Association, determines the number of Alumni Distinguished Professorships. There is no quota by college, department, or school.

**Eligibility and criteria for selection.** While no minimum number of years of service is required for eligibility, the selection committee places strong emphasis on the magnitude, character, and quality of each nominee's scholarly accomplishments as they contribute to the global land-grant mission of the university. Nominees must have well-established outstanding records of substantive scholarly accomplishment in teaching, research or creative activities, and engagement at Virginia Tech.

**Responsibilities and prerequisites.** Each Alumni Distinguished Professor shall continue making scholarly contributions in teaching, research, creative activities, and engagement at the same high level evident at the time of appointment. This includes continued contributions to the department or school and college, and may include contributions to other departments, schools, colleges, and units, subject to the professor's interests and the ability of the department head, chair or school director and college dean to accommodate such latitude.

Alumni Distinguished Professors may also elect, in a given term, to divert energies from their usual activities or responsibilities to other valued scholarly pursuits appropriate to this university-level appointment. Alumni Distinguished Professors embody the university's land-grant mission in their scholarly work and are crucial faculty ambassadors within and beyond the university community. As such, they may be called upon from time to time, individually, or as a group, to share their scholarship with university alumni or other interested groups, as well as to render special service or to offer advice to the university at large.

Each Alumni Distinguished Professor receives a base salary supplement from the endowment established by the Alumni Association and operating funds for scholarly support.

Given the high level of performance expected of this select group of faculty members, university and college administrators are cognizant of the needs of each individual Alumni Distinguished Professor for appropriate support personnel and sufficient space, within acknowledged fiscal and physical constraints.

**Nomination and selection.** The provost, in consultation with the president and the Alumni Association, determines the process for appointments to Alumni Distinguished Professor and issues a call to the academic deans for nominations. The deans, in turn, invite nominations from academic departments or schools. In addition, in special circumstances and in consultation with the appropriate dean, the president or the provost may nominate an eligible faculty member for consideration by the Alumni Distinguished Professor selection committee.

Screening procedures at department, school and college levels involve appropriate personnel or executive committees. Nomination dossiers include a current curriculum vitae, letters of nomination, from both the departmental/school and college screening committees, letters of support, and other evidence attesting to the quality of the nominee's scholarly contributions.

The provost appoints an Alumni Distinguished Professor selection committee that includes two current Alumni Distinguished Professors, one current University Distinguished Professor, and one faculty member recommended by the Commission on Faculty Affairs. The committee reviews the nominations and makes a recommendation to the provost. The provost's subsequent recommendation is sent through the president to the executive committee of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association's Board of Directors for review and recommendation. The president makes the final recommendation to the Board of Visitors for approval.

The Board of Visitors confers upon an individual the rank of Alumni Distinguished Professor for a period of 10 years; the appointment may be renewed.

**Renewal of appointments.** An Alumni Distinguished Professor may request an appointment renewal at the end of the initial, or any subsequent, 10-year appointment period. A current curriculum vitae and five-page personal statement of accomplishments during the appointment term is requested by the office of the provost and is reviewed by two current ADPs. The reviewing ADPs each make a recommendation regarding reappointment to the provost, who then forwards a recommendation to the president and Alumni Association for consideration. Final reappointment recommendations are made to the Board of Visitors for its approval. Renewed appointments are also for a period of 10 years.

The president and/or provost establish the guidelines and procedures for the annual review of Alumni Distinguished Professors. They are responsible for the ADP annual evaluations.

### **3.2.3 University Distinguished Professor**

Consult "[Distinguished Professorships](#)" on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage.

**General conditions and definitions.** The University Distinguished Professorship (UDP) is a pre-eminent faculty rank bestowed by the university's Board of Visitors upon members of the university faculty whose scholarly attainments have attracted national and/or international recognition. There is no quota by college or department or school.

**Nomination and selection.** The president and provost determine the process for appointments to University Distinguished Professor and issue a call to the academic deans for nominations. The deans, in turn, invite nominations from academic departments or schools. In addition, in special circumstances and in consultation with the appropriate dean, the president or provost may nominate an eligible faculty member for consideration by the University Distinguished Professor selection committee.

Screening procedures at departmental, school, and college levels involve personnel or executive committees in place. Nominations are accompanied by a full dossier of relevant materials including a current curriculum vitae, letters of nomination from both the department or school and college screening committees, and letters of support and other evidence attesting to the scholarly reputation of the nominee(s).

The provost appoints a University Distinguished Professor selection committee that includes one current Alumni Distinguished Professor, two current University Distinguished Professors, and one faculty member recommended by the Commission on Faculty Affairs. The committee reviews the nominations and makes a recommendation to the president. The president makes the final judgment at the university level and, if that judgment so determines, takes the recommendation to the Board of Visitors for approval.

**Responsibilities.** The rank of University Distinguished Professor is conferred by the university and is considered a university appointment (as distinct from a department, school, or college appointment). While the professor is nominated by department, school, and college colleagues, and continues to serve the discipline and department or school of origin, the perquisites and responsibilities of each University Distinguished Professor are fixed by the university.

The president annually adjusts the salary of University Distinguished Professors after consultation with the provost and dean of the relevant college.

The sole responsibility of the University Distinguished Professors is to continue their professional engagement and development at the same high level evident at the time of appointment. They are free to define the exact nature of their work after consultation with the dean of the college and the professor's head, chair, or school director. They are expected to engage fully with their colleagues in the governance of their departments or schools.

At the same time, they are encouraged to teach, when invited, in other departments or schools of the university or in college or university courses (e.g., honors). They may also elect, in a given term, to devote all of their energies to research, scholarship, or Extension activities. In shaping their plans of work, the University Distinguished Professors take full cognizance of department or school, and college needs and expectations. Their principal responsibility is to serve the university by giving their talents and sharing of their competencies where, in their judgments, they are most effectively employed.

It is the university's responsibility to provide such support as seems necessary to sustain the high level of performance expected of University Distinguished Professors.

**Term.** Incumbents carry the rank of University Distinguished Professor until resignation or retirement from the university, subject to the usual standard of continuous high performance. The rank is conferred only by the university Board of Visitors and is altered by that body alone, on the recommendation of the president.

### **3.3 Appointments with Tenure**

Consult "[Promotion and Tenure](#)" and "[Procedures for Faculty Appointments with Tenure](#)" on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage.

A new faculty appointment with tenure may be made with the review and approval of the department head or chair, school director, the department or school promotion and tenure committee, a subcommittee of the college promotion and tenure committee appointed by the dean, the dean, a subcommittee of the university promotion and tenure committee, the provost, and the president. Ultimately, final approval rests with the Board of Visitors.

The dean forwards to the provost and president for their consideration and decision: the candidate's application package, including cover letter, curriculum vitae, and at least two letters of reference which address the appointment of rank and tenure; documentation of the department or school promotion and tenure committee's approval of rank and tenure, documentation of the college promotion and tenure subcommittee's approval of rank and tenure, and concurrence of the department head, chair, or school director and dean with as much supporting evidence as deemed appropriate; and a brief overview of the search itself, for example, how many candidates applied, were interviewed, and the compelling case for the candidate.

With approvals by the department or school committee and the department head, chair, or school director, and approvals by the college subcommittee and/or dean, the provost will forward the candidate's package to the university promotion and tenure subcommittee, which will include three faculty members who previously served on the university committee. The provost will invite faculty members who are rotating off the university committee to serve on the subcommittee and will appoint others with prior experience as necessary. The provost will receive the recommendation of the university promotion and tenure subcommittee and will make a recommendation to the president. The president makes the decision to approve and takes the final approval to the Board of Visitors.

In general, faculty recruited from a comparable university should be recommended for a position at Virginia Tech at a similar level with tenure. If the recommended appointment involves a promotion or the initial awarding of tenure, the case must be strongly justified. If an individual comes from a university with a less extensive research mission, the case must also be strongly justified.

### **3.3.1 Temporary, Part-time, Tenure-Track and Tenured Appointments**

While tenure-track and tenured appointments are usually full-time, Virginia Tech recognizes the importance of allowing flexibility in the percent of employment so that faculty members can better manage the balance between their professional work and family or personal obligations over a defined period, or perhaps permanently. This policy is intended to encourage departments and schools to accommodate reasonable requests for part-time appointments; however, part-time appointments are not an entitlement, and requests may be turned down when the faculty member and the department or school cannot agree upon a workable plan.

When conducting a search for a tenure-track appointment, departments or schools continue to advertise for full-time tenure-track or tenured positions and must have funding for a full-time hire. Advertisements include information about university policies for flexible appointments. If desired, the faculty member requests and negotiates a part-time appointment at or after the point of hire if acceptable to the department or school.

Tenure-track faculty members may request a part-time appointment only for reasons of balancing work and family such as the arrival or care of a child, the care of a family member, or for personal circumstances related to the health of the faculty member. In addition, they may request a term part-time appointment only (with specific starting and ending dates), allowing the issue to be revisited on a defined cycle. While such term appointments can be renewed throughout the

probationary period, a permanent part-time appointment may not be granted until tenure is awarded.

If approved by the department head, chair, or school director and dean, and provost, tenured faculty members may request either term or permanent part-time appointments for reasons stated above, or to balance work at Virginia Tech with professional practice or significant community or public service. For example, a professor who wishes to serve as a consultant in addition to an appointment at Virginia Tech; a professor who wishes to engage in entrepreneurial activity outside of university responsibilities; or a professor who runs for public office for a limited term and wishes to reduce the workload at Virginia Tech for that period.

Part-time tenure-track and tenured appointments are either term or permanent. Term part-time appointments are in increments from one semester up to two years. During the duration of a part-time term appointment, terms of the appointment are only changed via the agreement of all parties. A term agreement must specify the date on which the faculty member is expected to return to full-time status. Renewal of a term appointment should be negotiated no less than three months before the end of the current term so that the department or school can plan accordingly. For term part-time appointments, departments and schools can use the salary savings to replace the work of the faculty member on the part-time appointment.

Only the faculty member may initiate a request for conversion from full-time to part-time appointment. The reasons for the request for a change in the percentage of the appointment should be clearly stated. The department head, chair, or school director should make a careful assessment of the needs of the department or school and works with the faculty member requesting the part-time appointment to facilitate the request whenever possible. The period for which this part-time appointment is granted shall be clearly stated (renewable terms from one semester up to two years, or permanent).

The written agreement should include a careful and thorough statement of work expectations for the part-time appointment. Generally, faculty members continue to contribute to all areas of responsibility, but with reduced expectations for accomplishment proportional to the fractional appointment. Service responsibilities for faculty members on part-time appointments are generally proportional to their appointments. Faculty members on part-time appointments are not excused from department, school, college, or university service because of the part-time appointments.

The written agreement for either an initial appointment or a conversion of a full-time appointment to part-time status and any subsequent renewal requires the approval of the faculty member, department head, chair, or school director, and dean, and provost.

An initial term part-time appointment, either tenured or tenure-track, may be approved to accommodate a dual career hire if funding is not immediately available to support a full-time position, or if the faculty member seeks a part-time appointment consistent with the intent of this policy. The expectation is that the subsequent reappointment, if recommended, is for a full-time position, unless the faculty member requests a renewal of the term part-time appointment in accordance with these guidelines. A part-time appointment created for a dual career hire is

approved through the usual approval processes for dual career hires. (See chapter two of this handbook “Dual Career Program.”)

Faculty members on part-time appointments, whether term or permanent, retain all rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a tenure-track or tenured faculty member.

### **3.3.2 Permanent, Part-Time, Tenured Appointments**

For permanent part-time tenured appointments with no end date, a return to a full-time appointment is not guaranteed. If tenured, the faculty member remains entitled to the tenured appointment on a part-time basis only. However, an increase in the percentage of the appointment up to full-time may be renegotiated between the faculty member and department head, chair, or school director if mutually agreeable and funds are available. The department or school and the college determine the best way to cover the costs of the academic work in the case of conversion to a permanent part-time appointment.

Faculty members on part-time appointments, whether term or permanent, retain all rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a tenure-track or tenured faculty member.

Part-time appointments are made for any fraction 50% or greater of a full appointment; faculty members receive proportional salary. Faculty members considering such appointments are strongly encouraged to meet with the benefits office in Human Resources to gain a clear understanding of the consequences of the change to their benefits. Office and laboratory space may be adjusted for longer term or permanent part-time appointments.

### **3.4 Promotion and Tenure**

Faculty members should contact the department head, chair or school director for guidance on college and department or school “Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure”. In addition, consult “[Promotion and Tenure](#)” on the provost’s Faculty Affairs webpage.

The university is committed to academic freedom. Virginia Tech endorses the “1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” of the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges (AAUP Bulletin, September 1970).

**Eligibility.** Eligibility for tenure consideration is limited to faculty members with regular faculty appointments of 50 to 100% in an academic department or school in a college. Tenure is not granted to faculty members with temporary appointments or to administrative and professional faculty. Individuals with tenure who are appointed to administrative positions continue to hold tenure in those departments. Full-time administrators with appointments in academic departments or schools who engage in teaching and research may be recommended for tenure in such departments.

Promotion in rank and the granting of tenure are based on contributions made by a faculty member to the university in the areas of teaching, research/creative activities, and service/engagement. Colleges, departments, or schools are responsible for the administration of appropriate policies and procedures for the review and recommendation for promotion and/or tenure within their units.

**Reviews.** Faculty members being considered for promotion and/or the awarding of tenure have their dossiers reviewed at as many as three levels: (1) departmental/school committee and the

head, chair, or school director; (2) college committee and the dean; and (3) the university committee and the provost.

Occasionally faculty members are evaluated for a tenured appointment during the probationary period and before the final probationary (mandatory) year. Consult "[Promotion and Tenure](#)" and "[Non-mandatory P&T](#)" on provost's Faculty Affairs webpage. If such a case is the first attempt, there is no recourse to appeal or review of a negative decision, at whatever level it is reached, because of the certainty that the evaluation will be undertaken again within a limited time.

Once a promotion and/or tenure case has been submitted, it must proceed through the processes outlined in this chapter unless the candidate chooses to withdraw their case.

**Confidentiality.** To ensure the honest discussion of promotion and/or tenure cases, all parties involved must keep the deliberations strictly confidential to the extent permitted by law. The content of conversations and the results of any votes may be discussed only with individuals with a current role in the promotion and tenure process, such as committee members or administrators. Faculty members serving on promotion and tenure committees who believe that Faculty Handbook procedures are not being followed may bring their concerns to the Faculty Senate Review Committee for a confidential review.

**Voting.** Although some participants in the review process may serve at more than one level - for example a departmental/school committee member may also serve on the college committee - participants may only vote once on a case. A faculty member may not serve on any promotion and tenure committee that is evaluating a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship.

**Expectations Guidelines.** Each department/school and college is required to maintain and make available on-line "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure" that follow the university template and include departmental or school (and college as appropriate) procedures and expectations for reappointment, progress toward promotion and/or tenure, and the evaluation of promotion and/or tenure cases. Nothing in these guidelines, procedures, and expectations shall supersede or contradict the provisions of this Faculty Handbook. If a college adopts guidelines that establish a collegewide standard for promotion and/or tenure, with the dean's approval, departments or schools may maintain a set of guidelines that interpret the college-wide standard within the context of the department and school's disciplines and traditions. All guidelines will be approved by the faculty (through department, school - and/or college-level governance), the college-level committee and the dean, and the provost's office. Revisions to these guidelines must be approved by the faculty, the college, and the provost's office.

### **3.4.1 Pre-Tenure Probationary Period**

Consult "[Promotion and Tenure](#)" and "[Non-mandatory P&T](#)" on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage.

The pre-tenure probationary period is a succession of regular, full- or part-time term (fixed period) appointments. Decision about tenure, if not made earlier, is made in the final year of the probationary period. The final year of the probationary period is also called a mandatory year.

Evaluations for reappointment and an eventual tenured appointment occur during the probation period. The probationary period is typically six years unless approved extensions are granted. The beginning of the probationary period is July 1 (Calendar Year CY) or August 10 (Academic Year AY) of the calendar year in which the faculty member's initial full-time appointment starts, regardless of the month in which employment begins. The probationary period for faculty members who start work in the spring semester begins the following fall even though the spring contract period officially begins December 25.

The initial appointment for assistant professors, associate professors, and professors employed without tenure is ordinarily a period of no less than two years. Multiple-year reappointment may be subsequently recommended.

A faculty member who wishes to request a leave of absence during their probationary period should consult with their department head, chair, or school director about the effect of the leave on the probationary period, taking into account the professional development that the leave promises. The request for leave should address this matter. The provost's approval of the request specifies whether the leave is to be included in the probationary period. If the tenure decision made in the final year is negative, a one-year terminal appointment is offered.

### **Probationary Period for Part-time Tenure-Track Faculty**

Pre-tenure faculty members may request a term part-time appointment as described in chapter three of this handbook, "Part-Time Tenure-Track and Tenured Appointments," for reasons of balancing work and family or personal health issues. In such cases, the probationary period is extended proportionately. For example, two years of service at 50% count as one year of full-time service. The term appointment may be renewed. A permanent part-time appointment may be requested and granted following the award of tenure.

In determining the final tenure review year for those with part-time appointments, general equivalency to full-time appointments is expected, so that approximately five years of full-time equivalent service is expected prior to the final tenure review year if no tenure clock extensions are granted, six years if one year of extension is granted, and seven years if two extensions are granted. (In summing partial years of service, a total resulting in a fraction equal to or less than 0.5 is rounded down, and a fraction greater than 0.5 is rounded up.) However, review for tenure must occur no later than the tenth year of service, resulting in somewhat less full-time equivalent service (4.5 years) for a faculty member with 50% appointment throughout all nine probationary years prior to review. If a faculty member is denied tenure following a final year review, a one-year terminal appointment is offered.

Faculty members on part-time appointments may request a tenure clock extension in accordance with chapter three of this handbook, "Probationary Period Extensions (Extending the Tenure Clock)." (Extensions are granted in one-year increments, not prorated by the part-time appointment percentage.) However, the extension is not approved if it results in a final review date beyond the tenth year.

#### **3.4.1.1 Reviews of Progress Toward Promotion and/or Tenure**

Faculty members should contact the department head, chair or school director for guidance on college and department or school "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure".



Under usual circumstances, departmental or school promotion and tenure committees review the professional progress and performance of pre-tenure faculty members two times during the probationary period, usually in their second and fourth or third and fifth years. The timing of the reviews depends upon the nature of the faculty member's discipline and must be clearly indicated in written department or school policies. The terms of faculty offer (TOFO) identifies the initial appointment period. Pre-tenure reviews may be delayed if there is an approved extension as described above. Changes or variations in the standard review cycle must be documented in writing.

Reviews are substantive and thorough. At minimum, departmental or school promotion and tenure committees must review the faculty member's relevant annual activities, peer evaluations of teaching, authored materials, or other artifacts of research, scholarship and/or creative activity. Promotion and tenure committees and pre-tenure faculty members should use the university's promotion and tenure dossier format (available on the [provost's Promotion and Tenure webpage](#)) to organize and present information for review.

The pre-tenure reviews should analyze the faculty member's progress toward promotion and/or tenure and offer guidance regarding future activities and plans. All reviews must be in writing, with the faculty member acknowledging receipt by signing and returning a copy for their departmental or school file. In addition, the promotion and tenure committee chair and the department head, chair, or school director meet with the faculty member to discuss the review and recommendations. Faculty members are encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior colleagues and the department head, chair, or school director. Pre-tenure faculty members bear responsibility for understanding and meeting the departmental or school "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure".

In the fall semester prior to applying for tenure in a non-mandatory year, a candidate must inform the head or chair of their intention to apply, thereby giving the department or school time to conduct an additional review of the candidate's progress, if such a review is deemed necessary. Each department or school determines the extent of this review.

**Reviews for Part-time Tenure-Track Faculty.** The initial review for a part-time faculty member in the probationary period should occur no later than the third year of service (regardless of percentage of employment) to give early feedback on their progress. At least two reviews should be conducted for part-time faculty members during their probationary period; more are recommended. The anticipated schedule for such reviews for reappointment and for the final year (mandatory) review for tenure should be documented in writing as part of the agreement for the part-time appointment. Changes should be agreed upon and documented by the faculty member and department or school.

**Review of Progress toward Promotion to Professor.** At least one review of progress toward promotion to professor should be conducted three to five years after promotion and tenure is awarded (or after tenure is awarded at the current rank of associate professor). The review—required for faculty promoted and tenured during 2012–13 and thereafter—is to be substantive and thorough. At minimum, an appropriate departmental or school committee (e.g., promotion and tenure committee, personnel committee, annual review committee) must review the faculty

member's relevant annual activities, peer evaluations of teaching, and authored materials since promotion.

The faculty member may wish to complete a draft promotion dossier (using the format available on the provost's [Promotion and Tenure webpage](#)) to organize and present information for review.

The review should be developmental and recommend future activities and plans that will position the faculty member for promotion to professor. All reviews must be in writing, with the faculty member acknowledging receipt by signing and returning a copy for their departmental or school file. In addition, the faculty member may request a meeting with the promotion and tenure committee chair and the department head or chair or school director to discuss the review and recommendations. Faculty members are encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior colleagues and the department head, chair, or school director.

There is no specification for minimum or maximum time of service in the rank of associate professor with tenure. Consideration for promotion to professor may be requested of the department head, chair, or school director by a faculty member at any time. In the fall semester prior to applying for promotion to professor, a candidate must inform the head, chair, or school director of their intention to apply, thereby giving the department or school time to conduct a review of the candidate's progress, if such a review is deemed necessary. Each department or school determines the extent of this review.

#### **3.4.1.2 Guidelines for the Calculation of Prior Service**

Consult "[Request for Credit for Prior Service Toward Probationary Period](#)" on the Faculty Affairs Forms webpage on provost's website.

At the time of a faculty member's initial appointment, the department head, chair, or school director notifies the new faculty member of their standing regarding the tenure system, including when the appointment will be considered for renewal and length of the probationary period until mandatory consideration for tenure.

Credit for prior service toward the probationary period may be granted for appropriate service in another accredited four-year college or university but only if the faculty member requests such credit. In such a request, the faculty member presents all prior service undertaken after the completion of the terminal degree appropriate to the field. A maximum of three years may be credited toward probationary service at Virginia Tech. The request must be made in writing within one year of the initial appointment. The specification of credit for prior service toward the probationary period is subject to the approval of the provost on the recommendation of the department head, chair, or school director and the dean.

#### **3.4.1.3 Extension of Pre-Tenure Probationary Period (Extending the Tenure Clock)**

Consult "[Request to Extend the Probationary Period \(Tenure Clock Extension\)](#)" on the provost's Faculty Affairs Faculty Forms webpage.

A one-year probationary period extension is automatically granted to either parent (or both if both parents are tenure-track faculty members) in recognition of the demands of caring for a newborn child or a child under five newly placed by adoption or foster care. The request should be made within a year of the child's arrival in the family.

An extension of the probationary period may also be approved on a discretionary basis for other extenuating non-professional circumstances that have a significant impact on the faculty member's productivity, such as a serious personal illness or major illness of a member of the immediate family. In rare cases, extraordinary professional circumstances not of the faculty member's own making may be acceptable justification for a probationary period extension, for example exceptional delays in providing critical equipment, laboratory renovations, or other elements of the committed start-up package essential to establishing a viable research program.

Faculty members who benefit from this policy are expected to fulfill their usual responsibilities during the probationary period extension unless they are also granted a period of modified duties or other arrangements are made. Consult [Work-Life Resources](#) on provost's Faculty Affairs webpage.

A probationary period extension is granted in one-year increments. A cumulative total of two years is usually the maximum probationary period extension for any combination of reasons. Requests should be made within a year of the qualifying event (such as the arrival of a child in the family) or extenuating circumstance (such as an illness). The provost may approve exceptions to these limitations.

Faculty members may only be evaluated two times for promotion and tenure or continued appointment. The two evaluations may each be in a non-mandatory year, but in the case of a second non-mandatory negative decision, the faculty member will not be allowed a third evaluation. If the second evaluation results in a negative decision, a one-year terminal appointment is offered.

Requests for a [probationary period extension](#) are submitted in writing to the department head, chair, or school director. (A form is available on the provost's website.) Approval is automatic for new parents. Documentation of medical reasons (other than childbirth or adoption) is required prior to approval; documentation of other extenuating circumstances may also be required. Approvals by the department head, chair, or school director, and dean, and provost are required for probationary period extensions. The faculty member may appeal denial of the request to the next higher level in their organizational reporting structure.

It is very important that all individuals and committees participating in tenure reviews understand that any individual who receives a probationary period extension must be held to the same standard—not a higher or more stringent one—to which other candidates without such an extension are held. This is also true in the case where the candidate's dossier is considered on the original schedule for review. However, in this instance where an approved extension was granted but not utilized, the tenure review is not considered mandatory and can be conducted again in the subsequent year without penalty. A probationary extension usually extends the time frame for each subsequent review and reappointment during the probationary period. For example, an extension granted prior to the fourth-year review and reappointment typically delays that review by one year.

### 3.4.2 General Expectations for Promotion and Tenure

Faculty members should contact the department head, chair or school director for guidance on college, department or school “Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure”. In addition, consult “[Promotion and Tenure](#)” on the provost’s Faculty Affairs webpage.

In accordance with their assignments and as outlined in the “[Guidelines, Templates, and Cover Pages](#)” for Tenure Track Faculty available on the provost’s Faculty Affairs webpage, candidates for promotion and/or tenure will be evaluated in the following categories: teaching, scholarship, and service. While candidates are not expected to have equal levels of commitment or equal responsibilities in all these areas, scholarship is expected of all tenure-track faculty members to a degree and in a discipline appropriate for their assignment.

**Teaching (Includes advising/mentoring).** Teaching is a multifaceted activity that includes formal and informal advising/mentoring. In any assessment of a candidate for promotion and/or tenure, both the quality and the quantity of the individual’s achievements in teaching and advising/mentoring should be considered. Those evaluating candidates for promotion and/or tenure should give special consideration to teaching effectiveness: faculty members must demonstrate the ability to evaluate scholarship applicable to their field and effectively teach their discipline to students. If applicable to the candidate’s appointment, teaching may include didactic lecture classes and laboratory settings as well as integrated component of clinical practice.

**Scholarship (Includes research, creative activities, and Extension activities).** Scholarship is broadly defined at Virginia Tech as the discovery, transmission, and/or application of knowledge. Scholarship takes many forms, including but not limited to research, creative activity, and Extension activities. While both the quality and quantity of a candidate’s achievements should be examined, quality should be the primary consideration. Quality should be defined largely in terms of the work’s importance in the progress or redefinition of a field or discipline, the establishment of relationships among disciplines, the improvement of practitioner performance, or the creativity of the thought and methods behind it. To be awarded tenure, in addition to demonstrating productivity as a scholar, a candidate must provide evidence that their scholarship enhances their discipline, which is typically demonstrated by a growing impact nationally or internationally and the potential for greater impact in the future. Promotion to the rank of professor requires evidence of ongoing or renewed productivity and the realization of a candidate’s potential for greater impact nationally or internationally, including a description of how their scholarship has influenced their field.

**Service (Includes engagement, university service, professional service, medical service, and additional outreach and Extension activities).** In the spirit of *Ut Prosim* (That I may serve) and the land-grant mission, faculty members are expected to use their knowledge, creativity, and expertise to improve the human condition and engage the communities of which they are a part. Candidates must demonstrate their contributions to the governance, development, and vitality of the university, their academic professions, and other relevant communities at the local, state, national, and/or international levels. The quality and effectiveness of healthcare delivery, including activities in the presence of learners and outreach and Extension activities that are not considered scholarship should also be documented and considered as service.

**Required Department or School (or College) “Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure”.** The unique features of every candidate’s department or school, discipline, and assignment must be considered in any evaluation for promotion and/or tenure. Each department or school (or college, when college-wide guidelines are applied) is required to have “Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure.” Expectations guidelines account for disciplinary and programmatic differences unique to and within the department(s) and school(s) and specify what is required of their faculty members to fulfill the general expectations outlined above. Departments or schools, or colleges should carefully assess and state the overall standards of professional performance and contribution they consider minimally acceptable for the awarding of promotion and/or tenure. Expectations must be adhered to at every stage of the promotion and/or tenure process. Colleges that adopt a college-wide set of promotion and/or tenure guidelines will ensure that the “Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure” account for differences within and across departments and schools.

Besides consideration of specific professional criteria, evaluation for promotion and/or tenure should include consideration of the candidate’s integrity, professional conduct, and ethics. To the extent that such considerations are factors in reaching a negative recommendation, they must be documented as part of the formal review process and included in the candidate’s notification.

Every faculty member should maintain a current curriculum vitae, with copies filed in the department or school and college (or equivalent academic units, as appropriate). The candidate prepares a dossier that includes an executive summary; the candidate’s statement; documentation of performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship, service, and other activities relevant to the candidate’s assignment; and a list of work under review or in progress. The dossier is completed by the inclusion of recommendation statements, both internal and external, which are added as the dossier is reviewed at the department or school and college levels. For faculty who present significant interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary teaching, research, outreach, or Extension activities as part of their record, the dossier should include one evaluation letter from the director, coordinator, or leader of the interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary program.

Consult the [“Guidelines, Templates, and Cover Pages”](#) for Tenure Track Faculty on the provost’s Faculty Affairs webpage. All candidate dossiers must be submitted to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee according to the guidelines and [timeline](#) on the provost’s Faculty Affairs Promotion and Tenure webpage. The department head, chair, or school director or the department or school committee is responsible for ensuring that the dossier conforms to these guidelines.

The criteria by which faculty with part-time appointments are evaluated for tenure are the same as the criteria by which full-time faculty are evaluated. Promotion and tenure committees consider years of full-time equivalent service when reaching decisions, excluding any approved probationary period extensions granted under the extending the tenure clock policy.

### **3.4.3 Departmental or School Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure**

**Determination of Candidates.** In their promotion and/or tenure guidelines, each department or school will have a process for determining which candidates are to be considered for promotion and/or tenure, including those faculty members in the final year of probationary service.

Candidates should be identified in the fall semester one year prior to applying for promotion and/or tenure.

**Department or School Committee Composition:** Each department or school must have one or more committees with appropriate faculty representation to evaluate candidates for promotion and tenure, tenure at the currently held rank, and promotion to professor, and make recommendations to the department head, chair, or school director. While the process of selecting committees may vary between departments or schools, significant elements of faculty choice, as determined through departmental or school governance, must be part of the selection process. Some possible methods for committee selection include a combination of elected and appointed representatives; an elected slate significantly larger than the committee size, allowing the department head, chair, or school director to appoint the committee from the slate; or a committee elected by the faculty. A minimum committee size of five members is most appropriate to achieve adequate representation and effectiveness of committee operations.

**Department or School Committee Evaluation of Candidate.** The committee chair or department head, chair, or school director furnishes the committee with a dossier for each candidate. After evaluating each candidate's dossier based on criteria established in the department or school's "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure", the committee votes and writes a recommendation letter for each candidate, including the division of the vote. The committee's letter contains the evaluation of the candidate's performance in each relevant area and provides a recommendation for promotion and tenure, tenure at the currently held rank, or promotion to professor. In the absence of a unanimous recommendation by the committee, the division of the vote must be explained. A minority letter may be attached to the committee's recommendation letter. All letters must be sent to the head or chair and become part of the dossier.

Given their responsibility to make a separate and independent recommendation on each case, department heads, chairs, or school directors may not serve as members of department committees: program directors or area chairs may. A department head or chair may convene the committee, charge the committee with its responsibilities, and discuss the cases. However, after the discussions with the department head or chair, the committee must discuss the merits of the candidates, frame its recommendations, and take the final vote without the head or chair in attendance and without influence by the head or chair.

**Department Head, Chair, or School Director Evaluation of Candidate.** The head, chair, or school director evaluates each candidate's dossier, including the committee's letter, based on criteria established in the department or school's "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure" and writes a recommendation letter for each candidate. The head or chair's letter, which may draw from the committee's letter or letters, contains the evaluation of the candidate's performance in each relevant area and provides a recommendation for promotion and tenure, tenure at the currently held rank, or promotion to professor. The letter from the head or chair becomes part of the dossier and should follow the guidelines established by the provost, which are available on the provost's [Promotion and Tenure webpage](#). If the recommendation for promotion and/or tenure varies from the recommendation of the department or school committee, the reasons for that variance must be specified, including references to the department or school's "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure". The department head, chair, or school

director will share their letter with the department or school promotion and tenure committee as soon as it is available.

In all cases of a tenure decision in the final year of probationary service, the head, chair, or school director sends the dossier of every candidate to the dean, even when both the head, chair, school director and the committee have made negative recommendations.

In all other cases, the head, chair, or school director sends the dossier of every candidate to the dean, except if the committee's recommendation is negative and the head or chair concurs. Under those circumstances, the head, chair, or school director declares a final decision and no further review is carried out.

The dossiers that the head or chair sends to the dean are accompanied by a statement describing the formation and procedures of the department or school committee and a summary of the number of candidates considered by the committee in each category: mandatory, non-mandatory-year tenure, and promotion at each rank). The division of the department or school committee's vote must be added to the dossier, but otherwise remains confidential.

### **3.4.4 College Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure**

**College Committee Composition.** Each college must have a committee with appropriate faculty representation to review the recommendations on promotion and tenure sent by the department head, chair, or school director. While the process of selecting committees may vary between colleges, rules governing eligibility and selection of college committee members and the committee chair, as well as operating guidelines for the committee's deliberations, must be documented and formally approved by the faculty. Significant elements of faculty choice must be part of the selection process. Some possible methods for committee selection include election by the college faculty; appointment by an elected college executive committee; a combination of elected and appointed (by the dean or college executive committee) representatives; or an elected slate significantly larger than the required committee size, thus allowing the dean or college executive committee to appoint the committee from the elected slate approved by the faculty. However, given their responsibility to make a separate and independent recommendation on each case, the dean may not serve as chair of the committee.

As far as possible, each department or school within the college should be represented on the committee. The dean may appoint up to three tenured faculty members to serve on the college committee to assure appropriate representation of disciplines or very large departments or schools, participation by members of underrepresented groups, or other critical considerations to help assure fairness of the process in both fact and perception. Appointments by the dean may not constitute more than a third of the committee's total membership.

The committee may include department heads, chairs, school directors, or department-level promotion and tenure committee members. If department heads or chairs or school directors serve on college committees, their total number must be less than that of other faculty members.

The appointments of faculty members on the committee should be staggered to assure continuity from one year's deliberation to the next. If possible, members should not serve more than two successive terms (three-year terms are typical).

The college faculty representatives to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee must attend college promotion and tenure deliberations as non-voting observers but should not participate or attempt to influence college-level recommendations.

**College Committee Evaluation of Candidate.** The committee reviews the cases of all candidates recommended by the department or school committee and/or head or chair or school director as well as cases in their final year that receive negative recommendations by both a department or school committee and a head or chair.

The purpose of the review is to verify that the department or school's recommendations for promotion and/or tenure are consistent with the evidence, reflect college-wide standards, and conform to the college's expectations of the candidate's future success.

After the review, the committee votes and writes a recommendation letter for each candidate that summarizes its evaluation, including the division of the vote. If the recommendation for promotion and/or tenure varies from that received from the department or school committee or the department head, chair, or school director, reasons for that variance must be specified, including references to the relevant departmental or school "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure". In the absence of a unanimous recommendation by the committee, the division of the vote must be explained. A minority letter may be attached to the committee's recommendation letter. All letters must be sent to the dean and become part of the dossier.

If the committee includes department heads, chairs, school directors, or department-level promotion and tenure committee members, none of these members may vote on cases from their departments or schools, since each has already had an opportunity to vote or make a recommendation on those candidates. The dean does not vote on committee recommendations.

The college committee may ask the department head, chair, or school director, the candidate, and/or a representative(s) of the department or school committee to appear before the college committee to present additional information or clarify recommendations.

The dean may participate in committee discussions and serve in an advisory capacity to the committee to ensure compliance with college and university procedures. However, after the discussions with the dean, the committee must discuss the merits of the candidates, frame its recommendations, and take the final vote without the dean or other college-level personnel in attendance and without influence by the dean.

**Dean's Evaluation of Candidate.** The dean reviews the cases of all candidates considered by the college committee. The purpose of the dean's review is to verify that the department or school and college committee recommendations for promotion and/or tenure are consistent with the evidence, reflect college-wide standards, and conform to the college's expectations of the candidate's future success.

The dean writes a separate recommendation letter for every case sent to the provost. If the dean's recommendation for promotion and/or tenure varies from the recommendation made by the college committee, the reasons for that variance must be specified, including references to the relevant departmental or school "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure". Whenever the dean does not concur with the committee's recommendation, the committee is so



notified. In instances of concurrence, the dean's letter may include additional points not raised in earlier evaluations. The dean may share their letter with the committee and will add it to the dossier.

For every promotion and/or tenure case whether in the final year of probation (mandatory), non-mandatory-year tenure, and/or promotion, if either the college committee's or the dean's recommendation is positive, the dossier is sent to the provost. If the college committee's recommendation is negative and the dean concurs, the dean declares a final decision and no further review is conducted.

The dossiers that the dean sends to the provost must be accompanied by a statement describing the formation and procedures of the college committee and a summary of the number of candidates considered by the committee in each category (mandatory tenure, non-mandatory-year tenure, and promotion at each rank). The division of the college committee's vote must be added to the dossier, but otherwise remains confidential.

### **3.4.5 University Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure**

Consult [Promotion & Tenure](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage.

**University Promotion and Tenure Committee Composition.** The University Promotion and Tenure Committee is appointed and chaired by the provost. The committee is composed of the college deans, a tenured faculty representative from each college, a tenured faculty member at-large, and the provost. The faculty subcommittee of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee includes the college faculty representatives plus the faculty member-at-large. The provost, who is a non-voting member, chairs both the full committee and faculty subcommittee. The vice provost for faculty affairs serves as resource and scribe for committee deliberations.

Significant elements of faculty choice must be part of the selection of the faculty subcommittee; therefore, each college faculty, through means deemed suitable by them, nominates two faculty members for each vacancy, from which the provost selects one. The Faculty Senate nominates two faculty members for the at-large appointment, from which the provost selects one. The selection of the faculty members should be based on demonstrated professional excellence. The faculty members of the committee hold rotating terms of three years. Regardless of the size of the committee, the faculty must always have a majority of the potential votes.

**University Promotion and Tenure Committee Evaluation of Candidate.** The committee reviews the qualifications of each candidate recommended for promotion and/or tenure by the college committee and/or the dean.

The purpose of the review is to verify that the recommendations for promotion and/or tenure are consistent with the evidence, reflect university-wide standards, and conform to the university's expectations of the candidate's future success.

The faculty sub-committee initially discusses all the cases with the provost in attendance. Committee members provide a brief summary of the cases from their college to begin the committee discussion, though they are not expected to champion or defend cases. After the discussions with the provost, the faculty subcommittee must be given a period of time to discuss the cases in the absence of the provost and all other university-level personnel. The provost then

rejoins the subcommittee and asks the faculty to rate the cases to identify those they would like to discuss further with the deans. Deans are informed of which cases the faculty subcommittee would like to discuss further and the specific concerns the subcommittee has in each case.

The full committee then convenes. The deans present information based on faculty subcommittee concerns. The committee then rates the cases to clarify which cases require further discussion. Deans abstain from rating the candidates in their colleges, as the dean's statement, which is included in the dossier, serves as their estimation of the case's strength. The provost shares the result of the rating, after which the full committee discusses the cases. The committee adjourns and reflects upon the group discussion.

Upon reconvening, the provost invites committee members to comment on any case. The full committee then votes, with deans abstaining from voting on any candidates from their colleges. Similarly, faculty members serving on the committee do not vote on any case on which they previously voted.

The vote must occur using a secret ballot. Though the provost shares the result of the vote with the committee, committee members must keep the results confidential. The majority vote of the committee reflects either a positive or negative recommendation to the provost. A tie vote is considered a negative recommendation.

Following the committee's recommendation on each candidate to the provost, the provost makes recommendations to the president, informing the committee of those recommendations, including the basis for any non-concurrence with committee recommendations. The provost informs the president of any variation between the provost's recommendations and those of the committee. The president makes recommendations to the Board of Visitors from among those candidates reported by the provost, with the Board of Visitors being responsible for the final decision.

The provost notifies the appropriate dean of any negative decision reached by the provost, the president, or the Board of Visitors. The dean, when notifying the faculty member in writing, notes appeal options.

### **3.4.6 Candidate Notification**

At each level of review in the process, the candidate must be notified of the result of the review, whether positive or negative. The department head, chair, or school director notifies the candidate of the result of the departmental or school review, and the dean notifies the candidate of the result of the college level review. Notifications will only indicate whether the candidate's case moved on to the next level of review or not; they will not include the results of votes, the names of external evaluators, statements from evaluations, or excerpts from committee or administrative letters.

Notification of a negative recommendation for promotion and/or tenure must include all substantive reasons for that recommendation, including references to the relevant department, school, and/or college "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure". Notification of a negative recommendation will occur within ten university business days after the completion of committee and administrator deliberations. Notification must include options for appeal. Exceptions to the time frame must be agreed upon by all parties. In cases with a negative recommendation from the provost, the provost does not forward the case to the president until

the candidate has been notified and has had time to appeal. In cases with a final positive recommendation by the president, the provost notifies the appropriate dean who informs the candidate in writing of the reasons for the decision.

### **3.5 Appeals of Decisions on Non-Reappointment, Tenure, or Promotion**

(for *grievances* see Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures in this chapter of the faculty handbook)

**Appeal.** A faculty member who is notified of a negative decision following an evaluation for a term reappointment during the probationary period, for a tenured appointment, or for promotion may appeal for review of the decision under conditions and procedures specified in this section. The appellant has a right to an explanation of the reasons for the denial.

An appeal must be filed, in writing, within 10 university business days of formal notification of the decision, which shall explain the appeal procedures.

An appeal must be based on the following claims only: department or school criteria established in the relevant department or school's promotion and/or tenure guidelines were not appropriately applied; material from a dossier was unavailable to, or disregarded by, reviewers through no fault of the candidate; or information in the dossier was not considered, or that the decision was influenced by improper consideration.

Administrators and committees hearing an appeal must limit the scope of their recommendations to the claims presented above: in particular, they must not substitute their own judgment on the merits of the case for that of the body or individual responsible for the decision under appeal. The recommendations should address the allegations in the appeal with specificity and cite appropriate evidence.

A faculty member can appeal the decision at more than one level. There is no appeal of the president's recommendation to the Board of Visitors or the board's final decision.

Appeals should be resolved as quickly as possible without compromising thoroughness of review. Whenever possible, the appeal should be resolved in time to be reviewed at the first meeting of the Board of Visitors in the fall semester.

A faculty member with questions or concerns about the appeal process or who believes that the procedures described in this section have been improperly followed may, at any point, seek advice from the [Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation](#).

**Grievance.** Consult the Faculty Forms webpage for the [grievance form](#). Additionally, faculty have the option to grieve procedural violations of the promotion and tenure process—including violations of the appeal process presented in this section—after a negative decision on an appeal or instead of filing an appeal in the first place. Since the grievance procedures allow the grievant to state the grievance, they believe they have experienced and the relief they seek, it has a wider range of possible outcomes than the appeal process. However, because it is a slower process that may not be completed until the promotion and/or tenure cases in a given year have been decided, and because faculty cannot grieve “items falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures,” a grievance should be thought of as a means for faculty to seek an

outcome they cannot seek through the appeal process. The grievance process is described in chapter three of this handbook below, “Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures.”

### **3.5.1 Appeal of Probationary Non-Reappointment Decision**

Faculty members on probationary term appointments should make no presumption of reappointment. The department head, chair, or school director with the advice of the department/school personnel committee or the faculty development committee determines non-reappointment. Notice of non-reappointment is furnished according to the schedule in chapter two of this handbook, “Retirement, Resignation, and Non-Reappointment.”

If the negative decision is based on evaluation of the faculty member's performance, including perceived lack of potential for further professional development, the faculty member may appeal the decision to the dean of the college. If the dean sustains the departmental or school decision, the faculty member may request, through the dean, a further and independent review of the decision by the properly constituted college committee on promotion and tenure.

The faculty member presents the appeal in writing as specified in chapter three of this handbook, “Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Tenure, or Promotion.” The faculty member has the right to appear before the committee to present arguments. The college committee makes a recommendation to the dean, who informs the faculty member of the committee's recommendation and the dean's subsequent decision. The dean's decision closes the appeal process, unless it varies from the college committee's recommendation, in which case the faculty member may appeal to the provost for a final decision. The provost's decision cannot be appealed.

### **3.5.2 Appeal of Promotion and/or Tenure Decision (and summary table)**

**Appeal of negative department, school or college decisions.** Because all tenure cases evaluated in the final year of probation (mandatory year), even those given a negative recommendation by the department or school committee and the head or chair or school director, receive a full college level review, there is no appeal of a negative tenure decision at the department or school level. Cases evaluated in the final year of probation that receive a negative recommendation by the college committee and dean may appeal to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee via the provost.

Cases reviewed a second time within the probationary period whether promotion and/or tenure, if the committee and the relevant administrator both make negative recommendations, the candidate may appeal that negative decision to the next level in the process. The faculty member has the right to appear before the committee considering the appeal and present arguments.

If either the college committee or the dean grants the appeal of a negative department or school decision, the case resumes normal consideration, beginning with the college committee and dean. If either the University Promotion and Tenure Committee or the provost grants the appeal of a negative college decision, the case resumes normal consideration, beginning with the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and the provost. At either the college or university level, if the committee and the relevant administrator both make negative recommendations, the appeal is denied and no further appeal is provided.

**Appeal of negative university decisions.** Because all recommendations from the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and the provost are forwarded to the president, candidates may appeal negative recommendations of either or both to the [Faculty Senate Review Committee](#). The faculty member has the right to appear before the committee to present arguments. The Faculty Review Committee investigates the case and makes a recommendation to the president. The Faculty Senate Review Committee makes a recommendation to the president. The president makes a recommendation to the Board of Visitors whose decision is final and cannot be appealed.

**Table of appeal options.** The following table summarizes the progression of cases (whether promotion and tenure, tenure only, or promotion only) that receive negative recommendations from either a committee, an administrator, or both, including appeal options. The table is for reference only.

**Probationary Period**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Next Step</b>
Negative decision after <i>first</i> review during probationary period	No appeal
Negative decision on <i>second</i> review during probationary period	May appeal to next higher level
Appeal granted by next higher level	Moves to next level in process for normal consideration

**Final/mandatory year**

<b>Decision</b>	<b>Next Step</b>
Negative recommendation by department committee and by department head or chair	Moves to college committee and dean
Negative recommendation by department committee; positive recommendation by department head or chair	Moves to college committee and dean
Positive recommendation by department committee; negative recommendation by department head or chair	Moves to college committee and dean
Negative recommendation by college committee and dean	May appeal to University Promotion and Tenure Committee (through the provost)
Appeal granted by the University Promotion and Tenure	Moves to University Promotion and Tenure Committee (through the provost)
Negative recommendation by college committee; positive recommendation by dean	Moves to University Promotion and Tenure Committee and provost
Positive recommendation by college committee; negative recommendation by dean	Moves to University Promotion and Tenure Committee and provost
Negative recommendation by the provost	May appeal to Faculty Review Committee, recommendation is advisory to the president.
Negative recommendation by president	No appeal
Negative decision by the Board of Visitors	No appeal

### **3.6 Annual Evaluation and Salary Adjustments**

The Board of Visitors delegates the authority to the president or the president's designee for selected faculty appointments and compensation actions as outlined in the Amended Delegation of Authority for Selected Personnel Actions dated June 11, 2024.

The Board of Visitors annually approves a faculty compensation plan, including the authorization of an annual merit process guided by the university's Faculty Handbook and processes provided by the commonwealth. The faculty compensation plan provides information about the promotion and tenure process; the annual evaluation and salary adjustment process for teaching and research (T&R) faculty, administrative and professional (A/P) faculty, and research faculty; salary adjustments within the evaluation period, and the pay structure.

Salary adjustments are based on merit; they are not automatic. Recommendations for salary adjustments originate with the department head, chair, or school director and are reviewed by the dean, the provost, and the president. Because salary adjustments are determined administratively on an annual basis and based significantly on the quality of the faculty member's response to assigned responsibility, they do not necessarily reflect an accurate measure of the full scope of the faculty member's professional development as evaluated by relevant committees in the tenure and promotion process.

#### **3.6.1 Required Department or School (or College) Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure**

All departments or schools are required to have written guidelines outlining the process and criteria used in faculty evaluations. The adoption of such guidelines promotes consistency and transparency in this important aspect of faculty life.

The president annually adjusts the salary of University Distinguished Professors after consultation with the provost and dean of the relevant college.

The guidelines and procedures for the annual review of Alumni Distinguished Professors are established by the president and/or provost who are responsible for their annual evaluations.

Department heads, chairs, and school directors are responsible for conducting annual faculty evaluations, either independently or in consultation with an appropriately charged committee in accordance with departmental/school procedures. All evaluations must be in writing and include a discussion of contributions and accomplishments in all areas of the faculty member's responsibilities (e.g., teaching, research and scholarship, service, outreach, diversity and advising, as appropriate), comments on the faculty member's plans and goals, and any recommendations for improvement or change. Faculty members should receive their written evaluations within 90 days of submission of required materials, and they acknowledge receipt by signing and returning a copy for their departmental/school file, or the electronic equivalent. Acknowledging receipt of the evaluation does not imply agreement. If a faculty member substantially disagrees with the evaluation, a written response may be submitted to the department head, chair, or school director for inclusion in the personnel file.

In addition to their annual evaluation letters, all pre-tenured faculty members receive at least two thorough reviews during their probationary period and written feedback on their progress toward

tenure by their departmental/school promotion and tenure committee prior to reappointment in accordance with guidance included in chapter three of this handbook, "Probationary Period."

Faculty members with part-time appointments are reviewed on the annual review cycle used for all faculty members in the department or school. For the purposes of annual review, the fraction of the appointment must be taken into account when considering the appropriate level of achievement in that year.

### **3.6.2 Annual Faculty Activity Report (FAR)**

All faculty are required to report annually on their research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities, as applicable. Guidance on annual faculty reports is provided by department, school, college, or administrative unit, as appropriate. Submission of a faculty activity report (FAR) may be required for consideration for a merit adjustment.

Virginia Tech uses an electronic faculty activity data system to collect and manage information about research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities. This system automates the production of annual faculty activity reports, promotion and tenure dossiers, and CVs, as well as department, school, college, and university level reports. The system also enables deposit and claiming of scholarly works in the [VTechWorks](#) institutional repository and will feed public web profiles using [VT Experts](#). Training for faculty is available through Virginia Tech's [Professional Development Network](#) and for departments on request. Faculty members should consult with their department head, chair, school director, or supervisor on the use of electronic faculty activity reporting.

### **3.6.3 Unsatisfactory Performance**

For tenured and pre-tenured faculty members, failure to meet the minimum "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure" results in an "unsatisfactory" rating. Written notification of an unsatisfactory rating and the considerations upon which it was based is given to the faculty member, with copies to the dean and provost. A single unsatisfactory evaluation indicates a serious problem, which should prompt remedial action. Faculty members may respond in writing with a letter to the head, chair, or school director for inclusion in their personnel file, or they may seek redress through either the reconciliation or grievance procedures. Two successive annual ratings of unsatisfactory performance for a tenured faculty member result in a post-tenure review.

### **3.7 Post-Tenure Review**

Nothing in this section should be interpreted as abridging the university's right to proceed directly to dismissal for cause as defined in chapter three of this handbook, "Dismissal for Cause," or the right of individual faculty members to pursue existing mechanisms of reconciliation and redress.

A post-tenure review is mandatory whenever a faculty member with tenure receives two consecutive annual evaluations of unsatisfactory performance. Annual reviews for years spent on leave without pay are disregarded for the purpose of this calculation. The departmental/school promotion and tenure committee conducts the review unless the same committee participated in the original unsatisfactory annual evaluations. In this case, the department or school elects a committee to conduct the review.

Upon recommendation of the head, chair, or school director and with the approval of the dean, a post-tenure review may be waived or postponed if there are extenuating circumstances (such as health problems).

The purpose of a post-tenure review is to focus the perspective of faculty peers on the full scope of a faculty member's professional competence, performance, and contributions to the department or school, college, and university missions and priorities.

The faculty member has both the right and the obligation to provide a dossier with all documents, materials, and statements deemed relevant and necessary for the review. Ordinarily, such a dossier includes at least the following: an updated curriculum vitae, the past two or more faculty activity reports, teaching assessments, and a description of activities and accomplishments since the last faculty activity report. The faculty member is given a period of no less than four weeks to assemble the dossier for the committee. The head, chair, or school director supplies the review committee with the last two annual evaluations, all materials that were considered in those evaluations, any further materials deemed relevant, and other materials the committee requests. Copies of all materials supplied to the committee are given to the faculty member. The faculty member has the right to provide a written rebuttal of evidence provided by the head, chair, or school director.

The committee weighs the faculty member's contributions to the discipline, the department or school, and the university through learning, discovery, and engagement. The burden of proving unsatisfactory performance is on the university. The committee prepares a summary of its findings and makes a recommendation to the head, chair, or school director, with copies to the dean and provost. Final action and notification of the faculty member is the responsibility of the head, chair, or school director and dean, with the concurrence of the provost. The review may result in one of the following outcomes.

**Certification of satisfactory performance.** The committee may conclude that the faculty member's competence and professional contributions are satisfactory to meet the department or school's minimum "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure" thus failing to sustain the assessment of the head, chair, or school director. The review is then complete. An unsatisfactory rating in any subsequent year is counted as the first in any future sequence.

**Certification of deficiencies.** The committee may concur that the faculty member's competence and/or professional contributions are unsatisfactory to meet the department or school's minimum "Expectations Guidelines for Promotion and/or Tenure". The committee may recommend dismissal for cause, a sanction other than dismissal for cause, or a single period of remediation not to exceed two years.

**Remediation.** If a period of remediation is recommended, the committee specifies in detail the deficiencies it noted, defines specific goals and measurable outcomes the faculty member should achieve, and establishes a timeline for meeting the goals. The head, chair, or school director meets with the faculty member at least twice annually to review the individual's progress. The head, chair, or school director prepares a summary report for the committee following each meeting and at the end of the specified remediation period, at which time the committee either



certifies satisfactory performance or recommends dismissal for cause or a sanction other than dismissal for cause following the procedures described below.

**Sanction other than dismissal for cause.** A departmental/school recommendation to impose a severe sanction, as defined in chapter three of this handbook, “Imposition of a Severe Sanction” shall be referred to the college-level promotion and tenure committee, which reviews the case as presented to the departmental/school committee, provides an opportunity for the faculty member to be heard, and determines whether the recommendation is consistent with the evidence. The college-level committee may reject, uphold, or modify the specific sanction recommended by the departmental/school committee. If the college-level committee also recommends imposition of a severe sanction, then the same procedures used for dismissal for cause guides the process.

The reviews conducted by the department or school and college committees satisfy the requirement in step two in chapter three of this handbook, “Dismissal for Cause,” for an informal inquiry by an ad hoc or standing personnel committee. Thus, in the case of a post-tenure review, this step is not repeated. If a severe sanction is imposed or ultimately rejected, then the post-tenure review cycle is considered complete. An unsatisfactory rating in any subsequent year is counted as the first in any future sequence.

**Dismissal for cause.** If dismissal for cause is recommended, the case shall be referred to the college-level promotion and tenure committee as described in chapter three of this handbook, “College Evaluation for Promotion and Tenure,” which reviews the case as presented to the departmental/school committee and determines whether the recommendation is consistent with the evidence. If the college-level committee upholds the recommendation for dismissal, then the procedures specified in chapter three of this handbook, “Dismissal for Cause,” begin immediately. The committee review satisfies the requirement in chapter three of this handbook for an informal inquiry by a standing personnel committee.

### **3.8 Annual and Periodic Review of Academic Administrators. College and Academic Deans, Senior Administrators, and Academic Vice Presidents**

*Note: See chapter seven for periodic review of A/P senior administrators who report to the provost.*

In addition to an annual performance evaluation, and in accordance with [Policy 6105, “Periodic Evaluation of Academic Deans and Vice Presidents,”](#) academic deans, the dean of University Libraries, the dean of the Honors College, dean of graduate education, and academic vice presidents are subject to reviews every five years. If the review of a dean cannot be conducted in the fifth year as would usually be the case, the provost informs the officers of the relevant college or University Libraries faculty association as to the reason for the delay. A review may also be initiated at any time by the provost and/or at the request of at least one-third of the tenure-track faculty in the college, or in the case of University Libraries, one-third of the continued appointment faculty. If the review of a vice president who reports to the provost cannot be conducted in the fifth year, the provost notifies the deans and the chairs of the college and University Libraries faculty associations as to the reason for the delay. In the semester prior to a periodic review, the faculty association will be notified of the review and the association may schedule a meeting with the provost to discuss the upcoming review.

### **3.9 Annual and Periodic Review of Department Heads, Chairs, and School Directors**

[Policy 6100, "Department Head or Chair Appointments"](#) outlines the review process for academic department heads or chairs. In addition, colleges should have adopted more detailed procedures in accordance with the broad guidelines below so that reviews may be conducted consistently and appropriately across the college for those serving in academic leadership roles.

The purpose of the periodic review is to support the success of the university's academic units by providing developmental feedback to promote fair and effective academic leadership. Reappointment of an individual to academic department head, chair, school director, academic dean, or academic vice president must be preceded by a periodic review conducted in accordance with guidelines outlined in Policy 6105 or in Policy 6100.

### **3.10 Imposition of a Severe Sanction or Dismissal for Cause\***

\*Note: The procedures specified follow closely, but differ in occasional detail from, the "1976 Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure" approved by Committee A of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

#### **3.10.1 Adequate Cause**

Adequate cause for imposition of a severe sanction or dismissal is related, directly, and substantially, to the fitness of faculty members in their professional capacity as teachers and scholars. Imposition of a severe sanction or dismissal will not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom or other rights.

**Adequate cause includes:** violation of professional ethics (see chapter two of this handbook "Professional Responsibilities and Conduct"); incompetence as determined through post-tenure review; willful failure to carry out professional obligations or assigned responsibilities; willful violation of university and/or government policies; falsification of information relating to professional qualifications; inability to perform assigned duties satisfactorily because of incarceration; or personal deficiencies that prevent the satisfactory performance of responsibilities (e.g., dependence on drugs or alcohol).

Reason to consider the imposition of a severe sanction or dismissal for cause is usually determined by a thorough and careful investigation by an appropriately charged faculty committee (as in the case of allegations of ethical or scholarly misconduct, or through a post-tenure review) or by the relevant administrator (for example, the department head, chair, or school director, compliance officer, internal auditor, or Virginia Tech Police). Generally, these investigations result in a report of findings; some reports also include recommendations for sanctions. The report is directed to the relevant administrator for action; it is also shared with the faculty member. Imposition of a severe sanction or initiation of dismissal for cause proceedings, if warranted, follows the procedures set forth below.

#### **3.10.2 Imposition of a Severe Sanction**

**Definition and examples:** A severe sanction generally involves a significant loss or penalty to a faculty member such as, but not limited to, a demotion in rank and/or a reduction in salary or suspension without pay for a period not to exceed one year, imposed for unacceptable conduct and/or a serious breach of university policy.

Routine personnel actions such as a recommendation for no or a below-average merit increase, conversion from a calendar year to an academic year appointment, reassignment, or removal of an administrative stipend do not constitute “sanctions” within the meaning of this policy. A personnel action such as these may be a valid issue for grievance under procedures defined in this Faculty Handbook.

**Process for imposing a severe sanction:** The conduct of a faculty member, although not constituting adequate cause for dismissal, may be sufficiently grave to justify imposition of a severe sanction. Imposition of a severe sanction follows the same procedures as dismissal for cause beginning with step one. If the matter is not resolved at the first step, a standing or ad hoc faculty committee conducts an informal inquiry (step two). The requirement for such an informal inquiry is satisfied if the investigation was conducted by an appropriately charged faculty committee (as would be the case with an alleged violation of the ethics or scholarly misconduct policies) and, having determined that in its opinion there is adequate cause for imposing a severe sanction, refers the matter to the administration.

### **3.10.3 Dismissal for Cause**

The following procedures apply to faculty members with tenure or for dismissal of a tenure-track faculty member before the end of their current contract. Dismissal is preceded by:

**Step one.** Discussions between the faculty member, department head, chair, or school director, dean, and/or provost, looking toward a mutual settlement.

**Step two.** Informal inquiry by a standing (or, if necessary, ad hoc) faculty committee having concern for personnel matters. This committee attempts to affect an adjustment and, failing to do so, determines whether in its opinion dismissal proceedings should be undertaken, without its opinion being binding on the president’s decision whether to proceed.

**Step three.** The furnishing by the president (in what follows, the president may delegate the provost to serve instead) of a statement of specific charges, in consultation with the department head, chair, or school director and dean. The statement of charges is included in a letter to the faculty member indicating the intention to dismiss, with notification of the right to a formal hearing. The faculty member is given a specified reasonable time limit to request a hearing; that time limit is no less than 10 days.

**Procedures for conducting a formal hearing, if requested.** If a hearing committee is to be established, the president asks the Faculty Senate, through its president, to nominate nine faculty members to serve on the hearing committee. These faculty members are nominated based on their objectivity, competence, and regard. They must have no bias or untoward interest in the case and be available at the anticipated time of the hearing. The faculty member and the president each have a maximum of two challenges from among the nominees without stated cause. The president then names a five-member hearing committee from the remaining names on the nominated slate. The hearing committee elects its chair.

Pending a final decision on the dismissal, the faculty member is suspended only if immediate harm to him or herself or to others is threatened by continuance. If the president believes such suspension is warranted, consultation takes place with the Faculty Senate Committee on

Reconciliation concerning the propriety, the length, and other conditions of the suspension. Ordinarily, salary continues during such a period of suspension.

The hearing committee may hold joint pre-hearing meetings with both parties to simplify the issues, effect stipulations of facts, provide for the exchange of documentary or other information, and achieve such other appropriate pre-hearing objectives as will make the hearing fair and expeditious.

Notice of hearing of at least 20 days is made in writing. The faculty member may waive appearance at the hearing, instead responding to the charges in writing or otherwise denying the charges or asserting that the charges do not support a finding of adequate cause. In such a case, the hearing committee evaluates all available evidence and makes its recommendation based on the evidence in the record.

The committee, in consultation with the president and the faculty member, exercises its judgment as to whether the hearing is public or private. During the proceedings, the faculty member is permitted to have an academic advisor and legal counsel. At the request of either party or on the initiative of the hearing committee, a representative of an appropriate educational association is permitted to attend the hearing as an observer.

A verbatim record of the hearing is taken.

The burden of proof that adequate cause exists rests with the university.

The hearing committee grants adjournment to enable either party to investigate evidence about which a valid claim of surprise is made. The faculty member is afforded an opportunity to obtain necessary witnesses and documentation or other evidence. The administration cooperates with the hearing committee in securing witnesses and evidence. The faculty member and administration have the right to confront and cross-examine all witnesses. The committee determines the admissibility of statements from unavailable witnesses and, if possible, provides for interrogatories.

The hearing committee is not bound by strict rules of legal evidence and may admit any evidence that is of probative value in determining the issues involved. Every effort is made to obtain the most reliable evidence available.

The findings of fact and the recommendation are based solely on the hearing record. The president and the faculty member are notified of the recommendation in writing and are given a written copy of the recording of the hearing.

If the hearing committee concludes that adequate cause for dismissal has not been established, it so reports to the president. In such a case, the committee may recommend sanctions short of outright dismissal or may recommend no sanctions. If the president rejects the recommendation, the hearing committee and the faculty member are so informed in writing, with reasons, and each is given an opportunity to respond.

**Appeal to the Board of Visitors.** If the president decides to impose dismissal or other severe sanction, whether that is the recommendation of the hearing committee, the faculty member may

request that the full record of the case be submitted to the Board of Visitors (or a duly constituted committee of the board).

The board's review is based on the record of the committee hearing, and it provides opportunity for argument, written or oral or both, by the principals at the hearing or their representatives. If the recommendation of the hearing committee is not sustained, the proceeding returns to the committee with specific objections. The committee then reconsiders, taking into account the stated objections and receiving new evidence if necessary. The board makes a final decision only after studying the committee's reconsideration.

**Notice of termination/dismissal.** In cases where gross misconduct is decided, termination is usually immediate. The standard for gross misconduct is behavior so egregious that it evokes condemnation by the academic community generally and is so utterly blameworthy as to make it inappropriate to offer additional notice or severance pay.

The first faculty committee that considers the case determines gross misconduct. In cases not involving gross misconduct: (a) a faculty member with tenure receives up to one year of salary or notice, and (b) a probationary faculty member receives up to three months' salary or notice. These terms of dismissal begin on the date of final notification of dismissal.

### **3.11 Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures**

The following procedures are provided as the means for resolution of grievances against a supervisor or member(s) of the university administration brought by tenured or tenure-track faculty members.

#### **3.11.1 Ombuds, Mediation Services, and Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation**

**Informal dialogue.** It should be possible to resolve most faculty concerns or complaints through informal communication among colleagues working together in the academic enterprise. Accordingly, a faculty member who feels there is a grievance is encouraged to take it to the immediate supervisor in the collegial spirit of problem solving rather than as a confrontation between adversaries.

**University Ombuds:** Any member of the university community may visit the [Virginia Tech Office of Interactive Communication and Empowerment \(VOICE\)](#), the university Ombuds Office. The Ombuds listens and explores options for addressing and resolving concerns or complaints. The Ombuds Office does not have the authority to make decisions or to reverse any decision made or actions taken by university authorities. The Ombuds Office supplements, but does not replace, the university's existing resources for conflict resolution and its systems of review and adjudication.

Communications with the Ombuds Office are considered confidential. The Ombuds Office will not accept legal notice on behalf of the university, and information provided to the Ombuds Office will not constitute such notice to the university. Should someone wish to make the university formally aware of a particular problem, the Ombuds Office can provide information on how to do so. The only exception to this pledge of confidentiality is where the Ombuds Office determines that there is an imminent risk of serious harm, or if disclosure is required by law.

To preserve independence and neutrality, the Ombuds Office reports directly to the president. The Ombuds Office does not keep permanent records of confidential communications.

**Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation.** At the initiation of the grievance procedure, or at any earlier time, the grievant may request the assistance of the [Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation](#) in fashioning an equitable solution. Faculty members may also contact the provost's office of [Faculty Affairs](#) regarding options for reconciliation support. Contacting the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not required in filing a grievance, but it may be useful if the grievant feels that the issue may be amenable to, but will require time for, negotiation; or if the grievant is unsure whether the concern is a legitimate issue for a grievance; or if personal relations between the parties involved in the grievance have become strained.

For a potential grievance issue to qualify for consideration by the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, the grievant must contact the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation within 30 calendar days of the time when the grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is the basis for the potential grievance, just as if beginning the grievance process. If the grievant requests assistance from the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, that committee requests a postponement of the time limits involved in the formal grievance procedure while it deals with the case. The request is submitted in writing to the vice provost for faculty affairs by the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation. Also, the grievant should reach an understanding with the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation of the time frame planned for that committee's work on the case, such time not to exceed 60 calendar days.

Faculty members may also consult the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation about serious disagreements with immediate supervisors or other university administrators concerning issues that may not be eligible for consideration within the grievance process. In such instances, the committee contacts the relevant administrator to determine if there is an interest and willingness to explore informal resolution of the dispute; it is not necessary to notify the office of the provost.

**Mediation.** Conflict resolution and mediation are provided by the [Office for Equity and Accessibility](#). Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process through which trained neutral third persons (mediators) assist people to express their concerns and develop solutions to the dispute in a safe and structured environment. Assistance with mediation is available through Human Resources. Because mediation is voluntary, both parties must agree to participate for mediation to occur. Faculty members and supervisors are encouraged to consider using mediation to resolve disputes or to help address a conflict between a faculty member and another member of the Virginia Tech community.

**Role of mediators:** Mediators do not make judgments, determine facts, or decide the outcome; instead, they facilitate discussion between the participants, who identify the solutions best suited to their situation. No agreement is made unless and until it is acceptable to the participants.

**Requesting mediation:** Mediation is available at any time, without the filing of a grievance. Additionally, mediation may be requested by any party during the grievance process prior to step four. If, after the initiation of a formal grievance, both parties agree to participate in mediation, the grievance is placed on administrative hold until the mediation process is complete. If the parties

come to a resolution of the dispute through mediation, the parties are responsible to each other for ensuring that the provisions of the agreement are followed. In the event that the parties are not able to reach a mutual resolution to the dispute through mediation, the grievant may request that the grievance be reactivated, and the process continues.

Mediation differs from faculty reconciliation in that mediators do not engage in fact-finding or in evaluation of decisions. Both mediation and reconciliation, however, are voluntary; no party is required to participate in either process.

### **3.11.2 The Formal Grievance Procedure**

Visit the Faculty Forms on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage for the [grievance form](#). If the assistance of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not desired or is not requested; or if that committee determines that it cannot provide assistance in the matter; or if the grievant finds that the length of time the Committee on Reconciliation plans or takes with the case is excessive; or if the grievant is not satisfied with the recommendations of that committee, the grievant may pursue the issue as a formal grievance through the following procedure. Department heads, chairs, or school directors, deans, directors, and other administrative faculty will cooperate with the grievant in the mechanics of processing the grievance, but the grievant alone is responsible for preparation of the case.

**Step one.** The grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor (usually the department head, chair, or school director) within 30 calendar days of the date that grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance and orally identifies the grievance and the grievant's concerns. The supervisor provides an oral response to the grievant within five weekdays following the meeting. If the supervisor's response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

**Step two.** If a satisfactory resolution of the grievance is not achieved by the immediate supervisor's oral response, the grievant may submit a written statement of the grievance and the relief requested to the immediate supervisor. This statement must be on the faculty grievance form, must define the grievance and the relief requested specifically and precisely, and must be submitted to the immediate supervisor within five weekdays of the time when the grievant received the immediate supervisor's oral response to the first step meeting. Faculty grievance forms are available on the [provost's Faculty Forms page](#). Within five weekdays of receiving the written statement of the grievance, the immediate supervisor, in turn, gives the grievant a written response on the faculty grievance form, citing reasons for action taken or not taken. If the written response of the immediate supervisor is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

**Step three.** If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response by the immediate supervisor is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance to the next level of university administration by checking the appropriate place on the faculty grievance form, signing and sending the form to the next level administrator within five weekdays of receiving the written response from the immediate supervisor. The next level of administration for college faculty is usually the college dean. The administrator involved at this next level is hereafter referred to as the second-level administrator. Following receipt of the faculty grievance form, the second-level administrator, or designated representative, meets with the grievant within five weekdays. The

second-level administrator may request the immediate supervisor of the grievant be present; the grievant may similarly request that a representative chosen from among the university faculty be present. Unless the grievant is represented by a member of the faculty who is also a lawyer, the second-level administrator does not have legal counsel present. The second-level administrator gives the grievant a written decision on the faculty grievance form within five weekdays after the meeting, citing reasons for the decision. If the second-level administrator's written response to the grievance is satisfactory to the grievant it ends the matter.

**Step four.** If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response from the second-level administrator is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance within five weekdays to the level of the provost, including consideration by an impartial hearing panel of the Faculty Senate Review Committee.

Upon receiving the faculty grievance form requesting step four review, the provost, or appropriate designated representative, acknowledges receipt of the grievance within five weekdays and forwards a copy of the Procedures of the Faculty Senate Review Committee to parties in the grievance process. The provost immediately forwards a copy of the grievance to the president of the Faculty Senate, who also writes to the grievant to acknowledge receipt of the grievance within five weekdays of receipt of the faculty grievance form from the provost.

The grievant may petition the provost to bypass the Faculty Senate Review Committee and rule on the grievance. If the provost accepts the request, there is no subsequent opportunity for the grievance to be heard by a hearing panel. The provost's decision, however, may be appealed to the president, as described in step five. If the provost does not accept the petition, the Faculty Senate Review Committee hears the grievance as outlined in these procedures.

The Faculty Senate Review Committee does not normally consider the subject of a grievance while it is simultaneously under review by another committee or panel of the university.

**Hearing panel.** A hearing panel consists of five faculty members appointed by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee from among the members of the Faculty Senate Review Committee. The chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee polls all appointees to ensure that they have no conflict of interest in the case. Both parties to the grievance may challenge one of the appointments, if they so desire, without need to state cause, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee appoints the needed replacement or replacements. Other replacements are made only for cause. The chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee rules on issues of cause.

To ensure uniformity in practice, the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee or their designee serves as the non-voting chair of each hearing panel. If the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee has a conflict of interest concerning a case, the chair appoints a disinterested third party from among the members of the Faculty Senate Review Committee not already appointed to the hearing panel for the case to serve as chair of the hearing panel.

**Hearing.** After a hearing panel is appointed, the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee requests that each party to the grievance provide relevant documentation to be shared among the parties and the hearing panel. The panel holds its initial hearing with both principals present



within 15 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Faculty Senate president. If the panel feels it needs to investigate the case further, or requires more information, or desires to hear witnesses, the hearing is adjourned until the panel completes the necessary work or scheduling. The hearing is then reconvened as appropriate.

Each party to the grievance may have a representative present during the sessions of the hearing at which testimony is presented. The representative may speak on their behalf if so requested. Representatives may be legal counsel, if both parties are so represented, but if the grievant does not wish to have legal counsel at a hearing, neither party to the grievance may have legal counsel present.

These impartial panel hearings are administrative functions, not adversarial proceedings. Therefore, if legal counsels are present, they must understand that the proceedings do not follow courtroom or trial procedures and rules. Participation by legal counsel is at the invitation of the parties they represent and is subject to the rulings of the chair of the hearing panel.

**Findings and recommendations.** The hearing panel concludes its work and makes its recommendations within 45 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Faculty Senate president. The time limit for consideration may be extended by agreement of both parties.

The hearing panel formulates written findings and recommendations regarding disposition of the grievance and forwards copies to the provost, the grievant, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee.

**Provost's action.** The provost meets with the grievant within 10 weekdays after receiving the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel to discuss the case and advise the grievant about the prospects for disposition of the case. Within 10 weekdays of that meeting, the provost sends to the grievant the decision in writing concerning the disposition of the grievance. If the provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendations of the hearing panel that ends the matter.

**Step five.** If the provost's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendations of the hearing panel, the grievant may appeal in writing to the president within 20 calendar days. The president's decision is final.

### **3.11.3 Timeliness of Grievance and Procedural Compliance** (see chart below)

A grievance must be brought forward in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of the grievant to initiate the grievance process within 30 calendar days of the time when the event or action should have been known and is the basis for the grievance. The university administration is not required to accept a grievance for processing if the grievant does not meet the 30-day deadline, except in cases of demonstrated good cause.

Scheduled commitments made prior to the time of filing or advancement of a grievance that preclude action by either of the parties to the grievance automatically extend time limits for their duration unless this would be demonstrably harmful to the fair processing of the grievance. In such cases, on written request by the grievant to the appropriate office for that step, the grievance is advanced to the next step in the grievance process.

If the grievant does not follow the time limits specified in the grievance procedure it is assumed that the last proposed resolution was accepted as satisfactory. If the grievant desires to advance the grievance after the appropriate specified time limits have lapsed, the administrator who receives the late submission notifies the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee in writing, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee determines if there was good cause for the delay. If so, the grievance proceeds. If not, the process ends with the enforcement of the most recently proposed resolution. The finding on the matter by the chair of the Faculty Review Senate Committee is communicated to both parties in writing.

If either party to a grievance charges the other with procedural violations other than time limit issues, a special committee of the president of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee (or the vice president of the senate if the president is also chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee) is convened to rule on the question, as in disputes about the validity of issues qualifying for the grievance procedure. The special committee has the following options. It can either find no significant procedural violation occurred, in which case the grievance process continues unaffected, or that a significant procedural violation did occur. If the administrator committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance automatically qualifies for advancement to the next step in the grievance process. If the grievant committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance process ends at that point with the last proposed resolution established as the final disposition of the case.

#### **3.11.4 Valid Issues for Grievance**

For this process, a grievance is defined as a complaint by a faculty member alleging a violation, misinterpretation, or incorrect application of a policy, procedure, or practice of the university that directly affects the grievant. Some examples of valid issues for filing a grievance are: improperly or unfairly determined personnel decisions that result in an unsatisfactory annual performance evaluation; unreasonable merit adjustment or salary level; excessive teaching load/work assignments; substantive violations of promotion and tenure procedures including the appeal process (see appeal process in chapter three of this handbook “Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Tenure, or Promotion”); reprisals; substantive error in the application of policy; and matters relating to academic freedom.

**Issues not open to grievance.** While most faculty disputes with the university administration may be dealt with by this grievance policy, the following issues may not be made the subject of a grievance: determination of policy appropriately promulgated by the university administration or the university governance system; those items falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures (for example, complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment, appeals of non-reappointment, promotion and/or tenure decisions); the contents of personnel and other policies, procedures, rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes; the routine assignment of university resources (e.g., space, operating funds, parking, etc.); usual actions taken, or recommendations made, by administrators or committee members acting in an official capacity in the grievance process; termination of appointment by removal for just cause, non-reappointment, or abolition of position; or allegations of misconduct in scholarly activities.

**Adjudication of disputes on the validity of issues qualifying for consideration under the faculty grievance procedures.** If a university administrator rules that an issue does not qualify for the grievance process, the grievant may write to the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee within five weekdays of receiving such notification and request a ruling from a special committee consisting of the president of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee. The special committee considers the matter (including consultations with both parties if deemed necessary) and rules by majority vote on the admissibility of the matter to the grievance process. This special committee is called together by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee, who also sends a written report of the results of the deliberations of the committee to all parties concerned.

### **3.11.5 Particular Concerns and Definitions**

Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion make such an agreement. Visit the provost's Faculty Forms webpage for the form [Grievance: Agreement to Extend Deadline for Response](#).

Grievances that advance to step four during or close to the summer and/or teaching breaks during the academic year may require some extension of the stipulated time limits. The principals and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee negotiate such an extension. Every effort is made, however, to stay within the stipulated time limits. In case of disagreement, the Faculty Senate president rules on time extension and procedure questions, which might include a hearing conducted by three rather than five panel members, or other recommendations designed to expedite the proceedings while providing peer review of the grievance.

If a faculty member is away from the assigned work location at the time the event or action is discovered and is the basis for a grievance, the 30-day period during which the grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor to initiate the grievance process begins when the faculty member returns to the assigned work location. If the date of return causes a delay of such length that the grievance, or its resolution, is not timely, the grievant may submit the grievance in writing to the immediate supervisor (step two), omitting personal meetings until such time as the faculty member returns to the assigned work location.

"Weekdays," as used in this procedure, include Monday through Friday only and only when those days are not national, state, or religious holidays relevant to the principals in the grievance.

To protect a grievant from undue pressure in the pursuit of a grievance, if a grievant becomes ill and takes sick leave the grievance process stops until such a time as the grievant can resume duties. Exceptions to this provision are made at the request of the grievant, but only if the grievant obtains and produces medical certification that proceeding with the grievance will not be harmful to the health of the grievant or exacerbate the ailment that required taking sick leave.

All costs of legal counsel employed by a grievant are borne by the grievant.

If a grievant is employed away from Blacksburg and is required to travel away from their duty station in resolution of their grievance, the university pays all travel costs permitted under state regulations.

In the event that a faculty member discovers there is a grievance about actions by an administrator above the level of immediate supervisor that directly involve the faculty member, or with actions by an administrator not in the department or school that directly involve the faculty member, the grievant initiates the grievance process by seeking the intervention of the immediate supervisor within 30 calendar days of the discovery of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. If that effort does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, the grievant, after consulting the immediate supervisor, may file the faculty grievance form at the appropriate level or with the appropriate administrative office to initiate response from the administrator perceived as the source of the action causing the grievance. The grievance process then proceeds from that level onward in the usual fashion.

A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the provost is handled by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee and an impartial hearing panel, but the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel are sent to the president for ruling, rather than to the provost. A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the president of the university is dealt with by a special panel appointed by the provost in consultation with the president of the Faculty Senate.

Any final resolution of a grievance must be consonant with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and university policy.

Once a grievance is resolved, either to the satisfaction of the grievant, or if not to the satisfaction of the grievant, by the action of the provost in consonance with the hearing panel recommendations, or by the ruling of the president, that specific grievance is closed and may not be made the subject of another grievance.

### 3.11.6 Overview of the Formal Grievance Process for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

Below is an abbreviated overview of the grievance process and deadlines. Refer to chapter three of this handbook for “The Formal Grievance Procedure”.

#### Overview of the Formal Grievance Process for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

Step One	Step Number	Description
Within 30 days of the event  Within 5 weekdays of 1a.	1a.	Grievant meets with immediate department head, chair, school director, or supervisor.
	1b.	Department head, chair, or school director provides verbal response.
	1c.	If department head, chair, or school director’s response is satisfactory to grievant, that ends the matter.
	1d.	If department head, chair, or school director’s response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step two within 5 weekdays.
Step Two	Step Number	Description
Within 5 weekdays of 1d.	2a.	Grievant submits written grievance to department head, chair, or school director.

<b>Within 5 weekdays of 2a.</b>	2b.	Department head, chair, or school director responds in writing on grievance form.
	2c.	If department head, chair, or school director's response is satisfactory to grievant, that ends the matter.
	2d.	If department head, chair, or school director's response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step three within 5 weekdays.
<b>Step Three</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 5 weekdays of 2d.</b>	3a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the second-level administrator (usually dean).
<b>Within 5 weekdays of 3a.</b>	3b.	Dean meets with grievant; dean may request department head, chair, or school director to be present.
<b>Within 5 weekdays of 3b.</b>	3c.	Dean responds in writing on grievance form.
	3d.	If the dean's written response is satisfactory to grievant, that ends the matter.
	3e.	If the dean's written response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step four within 5 weekdays.
<b>Step Four</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 5 weekdays of 3e.</b>	4a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the provost.
<b>Within 5 weekdays of 4a.</b>	4b.	Provost acknowledges receipt of grievance and forwards copy to Faculty Senate president to receive recommendation of an impartial hearing panel of the Faculty Senate Review Committee.
<b>Within 5 weekdays of 4b.</b>	4c.	Faculty Senate president acknowledges in writing to grievant that copy of grievance has been received from provost.
<b>Within 15 weekdays of 4b.</b>	4d.	Faculty Senate Review Committee chair appoints hearing panel from among Faculty Senate Review Committee members; panel holds its initial meeting with both principals.
<b>Within 45 weekdays of 4d.</b>	4e.	The hearing panel concludes its work and makes recommendations to the provost and grievant.
<b>Within 10 weekdays of 4e.</b>	4f.	The provost meets with grievant.
<b>Within 10 weekdays of 4f.</b>	4g.	The provost notifies grievant in writing of the decision.

	4h.	If the provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendation of the hearing panel, that ends the matter.
	4i.	If the provost's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendation of the hearing panel, move to step five within 20 calendar days.
<b>Step Five</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 20 calendar days of 4i.</b>	5a.	Grievant appeals in writing to the president.
	5b.	The president's decision is final.

### 3.12 Research Leaves for Tenured Faculty

Information on faculty research leaves is on the [Research Leaves webpage](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs website.

**Study-Research Leave.** Study-research leave may be granted to faculty members for research and/or advanced study necessary to enhance the competencies of those faculty members to conduct their obligations to the university.

Full-time tenured faculty members with the rank of associate professor or higher, having accrued a minimum of six years of service, are eligible for study-research leave. Requests may be submitted prior to completion of six years of service, but faculty members must have tenure and have completed the sixth year before the leave period begins.

Following a period of study-research leave, an additional six years of full-time service are necessary before a faculty member is eligible for another leave. Time spent on study-research leave, educational leave, or leave without pay is not considered in compiling minimum service requirements for further leaves.

As part of the commonwealth's educational leave program, recipients of study-research leaves are provided with partial salary (not to exceed one-half salary). Full employee benefits remain in force while faculty members are on study-research leaves. Calendar year faculty on study-research leave earn annual leave at a rate of half their usual annual leave earnings.

Instead of a proposal for leave of a full academic or calendar year, faculty members may propose a sequence of semester leave periods at half-salary over several years, not to exceed in total one academic year (for a faculty member on academic year appointment) or 12 months (for a faculty member on calendar year appointment). If such a sequence of leaves is undertaken, all intervening periods of full-time appointment at Virginia Tech accrue toward the six-year minimum service required before eligibility for another study-research leave or sequence of leaves.

Alternatively, following completion of any study-research leave, faculty members may propose a single semester of study-research leave at half-salary following three years of full-time service to the university.

Recipients of a study-research leave may receive additional compensation from other approved sources up to a total equal to their annual salary from the university. Faculty members may receive the additional half salary from sponsored grants or contracts, resulting in a one-year period at full salary from university sources; the appropriate level of effort must be expended on grant-related activities. They may also obtain additional funds from external sources to cover expenses for travel, research, administrative assistance, and the purchase of relevant materials. Documentation of all external earnings and expected payments is required and must be reviewed and approved by the department head, chair, or school director and provost. Engagement in consulting activities must be consonant with existing university policy.

The request for study-research leave is made in the fall and, if approved, is taken the following academic year. Requests for study-research leave should be submitted to the department head, chair, or school director by November 1 for processing through the college, provost, for consideration by the Board of Visitors at their spring meeting (usually March). Requests are forwarded to the board, subject to recommendation of the department head, chair, or school director, dean, and the provost, with consideration of the need for effective continuation of the department or school's program. [Deadlines](#) are established annually and available on the provost's Faculty Affairs Research Leaves webpage.

**Changes not requiring approval by the Board of Visitors.** Listed below are changes to an approved study research leave that require department or school, college and provost approval but do not require additional review by the Board of Visitors:

- Postponement of study-research leave for up to 1 year;
- Change from a full year study-research leave to a half-year leave (or vice-versa);
- Change in the location of the study-research leave;
- Cancellation of study-research leave.

The faculty member must return to full-time service with the university for a minimum of at least one academic year at the end of the approved leave or repay the university the salary received plus interest. If less than this required period of service is met, repayment is required proportional to the compensation provided by the university during the leave period. The faculty member, before undertaking the leave, must sign a memorandum of agreement to this effect.

Within 60 days of returning to full-time status, the faculty member must send a letter to the provost, dean, and department head, chair, or school director summarizing accomplishments.

**Research Assignment.** Information on faculty research leaves is on the [Research Leaves webpage](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs website.

Research assignment is a special category of study-research leave that is awarded to a tenured academic faculty member for one semester of intensive study or research that increases the quality of the individual's professional stature and future contributions to the university. It may be taken in lieu of an ordinary yearlong study-research leave.

Full-time tenured faculty members with the rank of associate professor or higher, having accrued a minimum of six years of service, are eligible for research assignment leave. Following such a leave, an additional six years of full-time service is necessary before a faculty member may be considered for another research assignment. Requests may be submitted prior to completion of six years of service, but faculty members must have completed the sixth year before the leave period begins. Faculty members on calendar year appointments may take research assignment leave for up to six months.

Approval for research assignment provides the faculty member with full salary and related benefits for the period of the leave; faculty members may not take on additional responsibilities for outside income except as allowed by the university's consulting policy. Modest stipends associated with competitive visiting scholar programs at other institutions, competitive national or international fellowships, the Fulbright Scholar Program, and similar prestigious opportunities to support study and/or scholarly research may be approved where there is clear benefit to the faculty member and the university. Similarly, externally funded reimbursements or allotments for travel, temporary relocation, and other expenses associated with the proposed research assignment may be approved. Documentation of all external earnings and expected payments is required and must be reviewed and approved by the department head, chair, or school director, dean and provost.

When a faculty member proposes a period of paid employment greater than 50% of the annual salary in a corporate or governmental setting, leave without pay or a contract through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act may be more appropriate than a research assignment.

The primary privilege of a research assignment is entire relief from teaching and administrative duties for one semester. A secondary privilege is that the assignment may be carried out at any location approved by the dean, although research programs that require facilities, library resources, or collaborations not available at the university are given special consideration.

An application for research assignment should be submitted to the appropriate department head, chair, or school director by November 1 of the academic year preceding that in which the research assignment will be made. The application should be in the form of a letter, which includes a detailed description of the proposed research or other scholarly project, the location of that activity, and the relevance of the proposed activity in contributing to the faculty member's own scholarly research program. The department head, chair, or school director reviews the application and forwards it with a recommendation to the college dean by mid-November indicating the provisions that will be made to accommodate the faculty member's teaching and advising responsibilities.

The dean is expected to weigh fiscal and academic load considerations to assure an equitable distribution of the awards. The dean reviews and forwards research assignment requests to the provost by mid-December. The provost reviews the recommendations, communicates with the deans, and announces the results to each candidate following approval by the Board of Visitors. [Deadlines](#) are established annually and available on the provost's Faculty Affairs Research Leaves webpage.

**Changes not requiring approval by the Board of Visitors.** Listed below are changes to an approved research assignment that require department or school, college and provost approval but do not require additional review by the Board of Visitors:



- Postponement of research assignment for up to 1 year;
- Change from a full year research assignment to a half-year leave (or vice versa);
- Change in the location of research assignment;
- Cancellation of the research assignment.

The faculty member must return to full-time service with the university for a minimum of at least one academic year at the end of the approved leave. If less than this required period of service is met, repayment is required of a proportion of the compensation provided by the university during the leave period. The faculty member, before undertaking the research assignment, must sign a memorandum of agreement to this effect.

Within 60 days of returning to full-time status, the faculty member must send a letter to the provost, dean, and department head, chair, or school director summarizing accomplishments.

### **3.13 Work-Life Resources for Tenure Track and Tenured Faculty**

Consult [Work-Life Resources](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage including information on dual career program, tenure clock extension, modified duties, caregiving, part-time employment, retirement transition and other university resources.

#### **3.13.1 Dual Career**

Virginia Tech recognizes that meeting the needs of today's professional couples is a key factor in recruiting and retaining new faculty, and that many prospective candidates for faculty positions have spouses or partners who are also seeking employment. Given limited funding, priority will be given to individuals with outstanding faculty credentials where the primary candidate is being recruited for a tenure-track faculty or senior administrative position. [Guidelines for department heads, chairs, and school directors](#) are available on the provost's Faculty Affairs Work Life Resources webpage. The [Human Resources Dual Career Program](#) page provides additional support for faculty spouses and partners seeking employment in the New River Valley.

#### **3.13.2 Modified Duties**

Consult [Guidance on Paid Parental Leave and Modified Duties](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs Work-Life Resources webpage.

The university recognizes the need for all tenured and tenure-track faculty members to balance the commitments of family and work. Special family circumstances, for example, birth or adoption of a child, severe illness of an immediate family member, or even issues of personal health, can cause substantial alterations to one's daily routine, thus creating a need to construct a modified workload and flexible schedule for a period of time.

Since the circumstances may vary widely for faculty members at different stages of their careers and with different family and workload situations, this policy does not prescribe the exact nature of the accommodation. In many cases, it may be a reduction or elimination of a teaching assignment while the faculty member continues to meet ongoing, but more flexible research and graduate student supervision obligations. In general, the university's commitment is to work with a faculty member to devise a modified workload and schedule that enables the faculty member to remain an active and productive member of the department. Because there is no reduction in salary, the faculty member is expected to have a set of full-time responsibilities.

An eligible faculty member is encouraged to speak with the department head, chair or school director as soon as possible about the need for modified duties to ensure the maximum amount of time for planning. A department chair, in conjunction with the dean, is responsible for working with a faculty member to ensure a fair plan for modified duties is implemented, if possible, budgetary constraints are considered, and student or other needs are met. The policy does not create an entitlement if there are legitimate business-related reasons for denying the request. Final decisions about the nature of the modified duties are the responsibility of the department head, chair, or school director in consultation with the dean.

The provisions of this policy cannot adequately address all individual circumstances. Sick leave (including disability), leave without pay, or permanent reduction in appointment to part-time status may be options to consider for longer-term or more demanding needs. This policy is not intended to provide release time from teaching for the purpose of allowing additional time for research. Reduction in teaching assignments for research purposes is the prerogative of the department and a function of the university's program of study- research leaves.

**Eligibility:** Modified duties may be requested by any faculty member in a full-time tenured or tenure-track appointment for the purpose of managing family responsibilities or, in exceptional cases, personal health issues not addressed by sick leave. The policy applies to eligible faculty upon employment.

**Guidelines:** The period of modified duties is one semester, or an equivalent amount of time for those faculty members whose responsibilities are not tied directly to teaching on the academic calendar.

Modification of duties should not result in additional duties during the subsequent semester, e.g., the faculty member should not be asked to make up the released teaching before or after the semester of modified duties. The faculty member cannot be employed by another institution during the period of modified duties, nor can the release time be used for extensive professional travel or other increased professional activities (including consulting) that do not meet the goals of the policy.

Medical documentation is required if the period of modified duties is requested related to a health issue not addressed by sick leave.

A semester of modified duties should be considered in addition to, not as a substitute for, sick leave, family leave and paid parental leave available to those giving birth or adopting during the period of the appointment (i.e., during the academic year for those on academic year appointments, or any time for those on calendar year appointments). There are no work expectations for individuals on approved sick or family leave.

Requests for outside consulting during the period of modified duties are not usually approved.

A faculty member should submit a request for modified duties as early as possible so the department can plan appropriately. The request form is available on the provost's Faculty Forms page. The plan of proposed activities is developed in consultation with the department head, chair, or school director and the dean. The duties can be department- based, college-based, or a combination.

Subject to available funding, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost provides an allotment to the faculty member's unit to replace teaching (or to use in other ways relevant to the modification of duties) that is lost through the granting of a term of modified duties. Additional support from departments, schools, and colleges is strongly encouraged, and should be noted in the request.

Approval of the department head, chair, school director, dean, and provost is required. If the department head, chair, or school director does not support the request, the reasons for denial are provided in writing, and the request is automatically forwarded to the dean for further review. The decision of the dean is final.

### **3.13.3 Voluntary Transitional Retirement Program (VTRP)**

[Policy 4410 Voluntary Transitional Retirement Program](#) outlines a program to assist the university's tenured and continued appointment faculty in their transition from full-time active service to retirement and, in some cases, to facilitate their subsequent part-time re-employment to address staffing needs or to support research efforts. Consult Retirement Transition on the provost's Faculty Affairs [Work-Life Resources](#) webpage.

## CHAPTER FOUR – UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES FACULTY WITH CONTINUED APPOINTMENT OR ON THE CONTINUED APPOINTMENT-TRACK

### 4.0 Employment Policies for University Libraries Faculty with Continued Appointment or on the Continued Appointment-Track

#### 4.1 Continued Appointment or Continued Appointment-Track

The policies applicable to faculty members with continued appointment or on the continued appointment-track are covered in this chapter of the faculty handbook. Policies are in chapter seven of this handbook for University Libraries faculty who are not on the continued appointment track or on a continued appointment.

Consult [University Libraries employment website](#) for information.

Like tenure, continued appointment is for the protection of the academic freedom of University Libraries faculty who are engaged in creating new programs and scholarship.

As the primary means through which students and faculty gain access to the storehouse of organized knowledge, the [University Libraries](#) perform a unique and indispensable function in the educational process. In this function, faculty members of the University Libraries share many of the professional concerns of their colleagues in all the colleges. The university recognizes the need to protect the academic freedom of librarians in their responsibility to ensure the availability of information and ideas, no matter how controversial, so that teachers may freely teach, and students may freely learn.

Continued appointment is the equivalent of tenure in the university's colleges. Faculty members in the University Libraries may hold continued appointment or may be on the continued appointment-track; just as the college faculty may be tenured or on the tenure-track. Provisions for term (fixed period) appointments during a probationary period are parallel to those for members of the college faculty. Evaluation for continued appointment (in contrast to term appointment) is made no later than the sixth year of such a probationary period.

A University Libraries faculty member with continued appointment will have continued employment until retirement with termination of employment based only on unsatisfactory performance, proof of misconduct, discontinuance, or reduction in a segment of the university's research or educational program, or University Libraries reorganization because of changing patterns of University Libraries service or technological advances.

If a position held by a University Libraries faculty member with continued appointment is eliminated or changes to such a degree that the incumbent can no longer fulfill the requirements, every effort will be made to reassign the faculty member to another position. If the position of a University Libraries faculty member with continued appointment is terminated, it will not be re-established and refilled within a period of two years unless the appointment has been offered to and declined by the faculty member who was originally displaced.

The Library Faculty Association and the dean of University Libraries have developed [procedures for probationary appointment, continued appointment, and promotion for faculty of the University Libraries](#), including evaluative criteria for [promotion and continued appointment](#), to instill the highest professional standards in the University Libraries faculty. These procedures are contained in Procedures on Promotion and Continued Appointment in University Libraries.

Information on promotion and continued appointment is available on the provost's [Promotion and Tenure webpage](#). The University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the executive vice president and provost (provost).

The University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee is comprised of representatives from the libraries and colleges who serve in staggered terms. The schedule of these appointments can be found on the provost's Promotion & Tenure page.

## **4.2 Faculty Ranks for Continued Appointment Track and Continued Appointment Ranks: assistant professor, associate professor, professor**

Specification of faculty rank in the University Libraries does not imply a particular rank in any college department. University Libraries faculty may be invited to hold concurrent adjunct status in a college department in order to formally recognize their contributions to the undergraduate or graduate program.

### **4.2.1 Instructor**

The rank of instructor is for University Libraries faculty whose positions have been designated for continued appointment-track and who have not completed the terminal degree. Annual appointments may be renewed within the limits of a probationary period. Ordinarily, continued appointment would not be awarded at the instructor rank, although time spent at this rank counts in the probationary period leading to continued appointment. A master's degree or significant professional experience is the minimum expectation for appointment at this rank.

The dean of University Libraries with approval of the provost and president may recommend instructors in University Libraries for promotion to assistant professor. Final approval of continued appointment rests with the Board of Visitors.

Promotion of University Libraries faculty to the ranks of associate or professor is conducted in accordance with procedures in chapter four of this handbook, "Evaluation Procedures for Promotion and Continued Appointment."

### **4.2.2 Assistant Professor**

The rank of assistant professor is the usual rank of initial appointment for faculty on the continued appointment-track. Appointment to the rank of assistant professor carries with it professional responsibilities in learning, discovery, and engagement. An assistant professor may be assigned responsibility for teaching graduate courses and for supervising master's theses and dissertations, as well as serving on graduate student committees. The terminal degree appropriate to the field is expected for appointment to this rank. Information on [Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) is on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage.

### **4.2.3 Associate Professor**

In addition to the requirements for assistant professor, a person appointed as associate professor must have demonstrated substantial professional achievements by evidence of an appropriate combination of outstanding teaching, creative scholarship, and recognized performance in University Libraries, or related academic and professional service.

### **4.2.4 Professor**

In addition to the requirements for associate professor, appointment to the rank of professor is contingent upon national recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator.

### **4.3 Appointments with Continued Appointment**

An offer of faculty appointment with continued appointment may be made with the review and approval of the appropriate supervisor, the library Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee, the University Libraries dean, a subcommittee of the university promotion and Continued Appointment committee, the provost, and the president. Final approval rests with the Board of Visitors.

The dean forwards to the provost and president for their consideration and decision: the candidate's application package, including cover letter, curriculum vitae, and at least two letters of reference which address the appointment of rank and continued appointment; documentation of the library Promotion and Continued Appointment committee's approval of rank and continued appointment and concurrence of the dean with as much supporting evidence as deemed appropriate; and a brief overview of the search itself including how many candidates applied, were interviewed, and what is the compelling case for the candidate.

In general, faculty recruited from a comparable university should be recommended for a position at Virginia Tech at a similar level to continued appointment. If the recommended appointment involves a promotion or the initial awarding of a continued appointment, the case must be strongly justified. If an individual is coming from a university with a less extensive research mission, the case must be strongly justified.

#### **4.3.1 Temporary, Part-Time, Continued Appointment and Continued Appointment-Track**

Part-time continued appointment and continued appointment-track appointments are either term or permanent. Term part-time appointments are in increments from one semester up to two years. During the duration of a part-time term appointment, terms of the appointment are only changed via the agreement of all parties. A term agreement must specify the date on which the faculty member is expected to return to full-time status. Renewal of a term appointment should be negotiated no less than three months before the end of the current term so that the department can plan accordingly. For term part-time appointments, departments can use the salary savings to replace the work of the faculty member on the part-time appointment.

Only the faculty member may initiate a request for conversion from full-time to part-time appointment. The reasons for the request for a change in the percentage of the appointment should be clearly stated. The appropriate supervisor should make a careful assessment of the needs of the department and works with the faculty member requesting a part-time appointment to facilitate the request whenever possible. The period for which this part-time appointment is granted shall be clearly stated (renewable terms from one semester up to two years, or permanent). The written agreement should include a careful and thorough statement of work expectations for the part-time appointment. Generally, faculty members continue to contribute to all areas of responsibility, but with reduced expectations for accomplishment proportional to the fractional appointment. Service responsibilities for faculty members on part-time appointments are proportional to their appointments. Faculty members on part-time appointments are not excused from departmental, division, or university service because of the part-time appointments.

The written agreement for either an initial appointment or a conversion of a full-time appointment to part-time status and any subsequent renewal requires the approval of the faculty member, the appropriate supervisor, University Libraries dean and provost.

An initial term part-time appointment, either continued appointment or continued appointment-track, may be approved to accommodate a dual career hire if funding is not immediately available to support a full-time position, or if the faculty member seeks a part-time appointment consistent with the intent of this policy. The expectation is that the subsequent reappointment, if recommended, is for a full-time position, unless the faculty member requests a renewal of the term part-time appointment in accordance with these guidelines. A part-time appointment created for a dual career hire is approved through the usual approval processes for dual career hires.

Faculty members on part-time appointments, whether term or permanent, retain all rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a continued appointment and continued appointment-track faculty member.

#### **4.3.2 Permanent, Part-Time Continued Appointments**

For permanent part-time continued appointments with no end date, a return to a full-time appointment is not guaranteed. If holding continued appointment, the faculty member remains entitled to the continued appointment on the part-time basis only. However, an increase in the percentage of the appointment up to full-time may be renegotiated between the faculty member and appropriate supervisor if mutually agreeable and funds are available. The department and the dean determine the best way to cover the costs of the work in the case of conversion to a permanent part-time appointment.

Faculty members on part-time appointments, whether term or permanent, retain all rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a continued appointment and continued appointment-track faculty member.

Part-time appointments are made for any fraction 50% or greater of a full-time appointment; faculty members receive proportional salary. Faculty members considering such appointments are strongly encouraged to meet with representatives in the benefits office in Human Resources to gain a clear understanding of the consequences of the change to their benefits. Office and laboratory space may be adjusted for longer term or permanent part-time appointments.

#### **4.4 Reappointment, Promotion and/or Continued Appointment**

Faculty members should contact the department head or supervisor for guidance on department and University Libraries expectations for promotion and continued appointment. Consult the University Libraries [procedures for promotion and continued appointment](#) webpage. In addition, consult the provost's "[Promotion and Tenure](#)" webpage.

The university is committed to academic freedom. Virginia Tech endorses the "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure" of the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges (AAUP Bulletin, September 1970).

**Eligibility.** Eligibility for continued appointment consideration is limited to faculty members holding regular faculty appointments of 50% to 100% in the University Libraries. Continued appointment is not granted to faculty members with temporary appointments. Individuals holding continued appointment who are appointed to administrative positions, however, retain the status and privileges of continued appointment.

#### **4.4.1 Probationary Period and Progress Reviews (pre-continued appointment).**

The term “probationary period” is applied to the succession of term appointments, which an individual undertakes on a full-or part-time regular faculty appointment, and during which [evaluation for reappointment](#) and for an eventual continued appointment takes place.

Evaluations of University Libraries faculty during the probationary period are of two sorts: (1) annual evaluation of all library faculty by their supervisors and (2) reappointment review by the Library Promotion and Continued Appointment (L-P&CA) Committee in the candidate’s second and fourth year, in which the committee makes a recommendation to the dean of university libraries.

The beginning of the probationary period for faculty members on term appointments is taken as July 1 or August 10 of the calendar year in which their initial full-time appointment begins, depending on whether they are on a calendar year (CY) or academic year (AY) appointment, regardless of the month in which their services are initiated. (The probationary period for new faculty appointed for spring semester begins the following fall even though the spring contract period officially begins December 25.)

Under usual circumstances, library promotion and continued appointment committees review the professional progress and performance of pre-continued appointment faculty members twice during the probationary period, usually in their second and fourth or third and fifth years. The timing of the reviews depends upon the nature of the faculty member’s discipline and must be clearly indicated in written departmental policies. The terms of faculty offer (TOFO) identify the initial appointment period. Pre-continued appointment reviews may be delayed if there is an approved extension as described below. Changes or variations in the standard review cycle must be documented in writing.

The initial review for a part-time faculty member should be no later than the third year of service (regardless of percentage of employment) to give early feedback on their progress. At least two reviews should be conducted for part-time faculty members during their probationary period; more are recommended. The anticipated schedule for such reviews for appointment and for the mandatory review for continued appointment should be documented in writing as part of the agreement for the part-time appointment. Changes should be agreed upon and documented by the faculty member and the department.

Reviews are substantive and thorough. At a minimum, library promotion and continued appointment committees must review the faculty member’s relevant annual faculty activity reports, peer evaluations, and authored materials.

The pre-continued appointment reviews should analyze the faculty member’s progress toward promotion and continued appointment and offer guidance regarding future activities and plans. Pre-continued appointment faculty should be encouraged to develop a narrative about their scholarship goals with special emphasis on the place of their research and creative activity. Although this narrative may change across time, creating the context for their work can assist candidates in understanding how to continue to develop professionally in a national and international context in preparation for promotion and continued appointment. The dean or director, the mentor(s), and the library promotion and continued appointment committee should engage in discussions with instructors and assistant professors across the probationary period to encourage professional growth and development of the candidate’s scholarly work.



All reviews must be in writing, with the faculty member acknowledging receipt by signing and returning a copy for the faculty member's division-level file. In addition, the Library Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee and the dean meet with the faculty member to discuss the review and recommendations. Individual faculty members are also encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior colleagues. Pre-continued appointment faculty members bear responsibility for understanding expectations for promotion and continued appointment and for meeting those expectations.

The initial appointment for instructors and assistant professors (or those appointed to higher ranks) without continued appointment is ordinarily for a period of not less than two years. Multiple-year reappointments may be subsequently recommended.

The maximum total period for full-time probationary appointments is six years unless an approved extension is granted. Decision about continued appointment, if not made earlier, is made in the sixth year of the probationary appointment. If the continued appointment decision made in the sixth year is negative, a one-year terminal appointment is offered.

Pre-continued appointment faculty members may request a term, part-time appointment as described in chapter four of this handbook "Part-Time Continued Appointment and Continued Appointment-Track Appointments," for reasons of balancing work and family or personal health issues. In such cases, the probationary period is extended proportionately. For example, two years of service at 50% counts as one year of full-time service. The term appointment may be renewed. (A permanent part-time appointment may be requested and granted following award of continued appointment.)

In determining the mandatory continued appointment review year for those with partial appointments, general equivalency to full-time appointments is expected, so that approximately five years of full-time equivalent service is expected prior to the mandatory continued appointment review year if no continued appointment clock extensions have been granted; six years if one year of extension is granted, and seven years if two extensions are granted. (In summing partial years of service, a total resulting in a fraction equal to or less than .5 is rounded down, and a fraction greater than .5 is rounded up.) However, review for continued appointment must occur no later than the tenth year of service, resulting in somewhat less full-time equivalent service (4.5 years) for a faculty member with 50% appointment throughout all nine probationary years prior to review. If denied continued appointment following a mandatory review, a one-year terminal appointment is offered.

Faculty members on part-time appointments may request a continued appointment clock extension in accordance with procedures described in chapter four of this handbook "Extending the Continued Appointment Clock." (Extensions are granted in one-year increments, not prorated by the part-time appointment percentage.) However, the extension is not approved if it results in a mandatory review date beyond the tenth year.

Up to three years of appropriate service at an accredited American four-year college or university may be credited toward the six-year probationary period, as specified in chapter four of this handbook "Guidelines for the Calculation of Prior Service."

A faculty member on probationary appointment who wishes to request a leave of absence consults with the dean about the effect of the leave on the probationary period, considering the professional development that the leave promises. The request for leave addresses this matter

and the provost's approval of the leave request specifies whether the leave is to be included in the probationary period.

#### **4.4.1.1 Guidelines for the Calculation of Credit for Prior Faculty Service**

Consult "[Request for Credit for Prior Service Toward Probationary Period](#)" on the Faculty Affairs Forms webpage on provost's website.

At the time of a faculty member's initial appointment to the University Libraries, the dean notifies the new faculty member of the faculty member's status regarding continued appointment.

Excepting temporary appointments with limited terms, the faculty appointee is given clear notice of when their appointment will be considered for renewal and, if on the continued appointment - track, when consideration for continued appointment will be given. In this latter calculation, appropriate full-time service in another accredited four-year American college or university is credited toward probationary service at Virginia Tech only if the appointed faculty member requests such credit. [A Request for Prior Credit form is available on the Faculty Affairs Faculty Forms webpage.](#)

In such a request, all prior service is presented if undertaken after the faculty member completes the terminal degree appropriate to the field. A maximum of three years may be credited toward probationary service at Virginia Tech. The request must be made in writing within one year of the initial appointment. The specification of credit for prior service toward the probationary period is subject to the approval of the provost on the recommendation of the dean of University Libraries.

#### **4.4.1.2 Probationary Reappointment**

Faculty members on probationary term appointments should make no presumption of reappointment. Procedures for term reappointment or the granting of continued appointment for members of the University Libraries faculty are developed by the University Libraries. A decision for non-reappointment to a term appointment, based primarily on performance evaluation, is final if reached by the library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) and is sustained by the dean of University Libraries, as appropriate. Notice of non-reappointment is furnished according to the schedule in chapter two of this handbook "Retirement, Resignation, and Non-Reappointment." The specific reasons for the decision are provided to the faculty member in writing, if requested.

If the non-reappointment decision is reached by the dean in contradiction to the recommendation of the University Libraries library promotion and continued appointment committee, the faculty member may request that the non-reappointment decision be reviewed by the provost for a final decision.

The faculty member presents the appeal in writing as specified in chapter four of this handbook, "Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued Appointment, or Promotion." The provost may ask the University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee to review the case and make recommendations as an aid to that decision.

#### **4.4.2 Guidelines and Evaluation for Promotion and Continued Appointment**

Faculty members should contact the department head or supervisor for guidance on [University Libraries Faculty Promotion and Continued Appointment information](#) is on the libraries website and on the [provost's Promotion and Tenure webpage](#).

Promotion to a higher rank or an award of continued appointment may be granted to faculty members on a regular faculty appointment who demonstrate outstanding accomplishments in an appropriate combination of learning, discovery, engagement, and other professional activities. Every faculty member is expected to maintain a current curriculum vitae, with copies filed with the University Libraries. The curriculum vitae together with annual faculty activity reports, student or client evaluations, copies of publications, reference letters, and other similar documents comprise a dossier, which furnishes the principal basis for promotion and continued appointment decisions.

The evaluation of candidates for continued appointment closely parallels the process for tenure consideration for college faculty, and incorporates the same, or similar, elements of procedure whenever relevant or reasonable. Given the small number of faculty members on the continued appointment-track, their dossiers are reviewed at two levels (rather than three as required for faculty members in the colleges): first by the University Libraries promotion and continued appointment committee and dean of University Libraries, and second by the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee and the provost.

Although some participants in the review process may serve at more than one level, participants may only vote once on a case. A faculty member may not serve on any committee that is evaluating a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship.

Because the job descriptions and responsibilities of the candidates being considered do not conform to a single pattern or norm, it is not possible to set forth a statement of criteria with reference to which all recommendations for promotion or continued appointment must be made. Nevertheless, members of the general faculty seeking continued appointment or promotion in faculty rank are generally expected to have records of outstanding accomplishment in an appropriate combination of the following categories:

**Professional responsibilities:** Fulfilling the responsibilities of the position within the organizational unit by effective staff work, display of leadership, and a high degree of initiative.

**Research and scholarly activities:** Publishing in journals, presenting papers at professional meetings, developing other works of creative scholarship, organizing or chairing sessions at professional meetings, and fulfilling instructional responsibilities or graduate student advising.

**University activities:** Participating in the conduct of the activities of the administrative unit and the university. Such service takes innumerable forms, including serving on committees or in faculty governance positions, or participating in seminars or conferences.

**External activities:** Participating in local, state, regional, and national professional associations. Such participation includes activities such as holding office, serving on committees, conducting workshops, serving on panels, and attending conferences, conventions, or meetings.

**Awards and honors:** Receiving awards, grants, and honorary titles or being selected for membership in honorary societies.

Activities and accomplishments in other appropriate areas, beyond these five, may be included in dossiers and are considered.

University Libraries faculty are expected to develop within this framework the performance criteria that are most relevant to the responsibilities of those units. These criteria serve both as an aid to

faculty development and as a set of measures that the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee may apply.

The criteria by which faculty with part-time appointments are evaluated for continued appointment is the same as the criteria by which full-time faculty are evaluated. Promotion and continued appointment committees consider years of full-time equivalent service when reaching decisions, excluding any approved probationary period extensions granted under the extending the tenure or continued appointment clock policy.

Besides consideration of specific professional criteria, evaluation for promotion or continued appointment should consider the candidate's integrity, professional conduct, and ethics. To the extent that such considerations are significant factors in reaching a negative recommendation, they should be documented as part of the formal review process.

#### **4.4.3 Evaluation for Promotion and/or Continued Appointment by University Libraries Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee (Review Committee)**

The University Libraries has a committee with appropriate faculty representation to evaluate candidates for promotion and/or continued appointment. [University Libraries Faculty Promotion and Continued Appointment information.](#)

The University Libraries review committee makes recommendations to the dean of University Libraries. The dean may chair the committee or remain separate from the committee's deliberations and subsequently receive its recommendations. The review committee reviews the cases of candidates for promotion and/or continued appointment including those faculty members in the final probationary year. The dean furnishes the committee with a dossier for each candidate.

Rules governing eligibility and selection of members to serve on the review committee and operating guidelines for the review committee's deliberations must be documented in written University Libraries-level policies, formally approved by the faculty.

The University Libraries faculty determine who is eligible to serve on the review committee from among faculty members with continued appointment.

The review committee may include appropriate supervisors; however, these members may not vote on cases from their departments since each has already had an opportunity to vote or make a recommendation on those candidates.

If possible, some significant element of faculty choice should be a part of the review committee selection procedure. Where small numbers make an election process impractical, the dean appoints the representative.

If University Libraries supervisors serve on the review committees, their total number is less than that of other faculty members.

Review committee appointments should be staggered to assure continuity from one year's deliberation to the next. If possible, members should not serve for more than two successive terms.

Selection of the review committee chair is determined in accordance with policies approved by the libraries faculty.

The dean may be present at the review committee's deliberations. The dean serves in an advisory capacity to the review committee to assure compliance with university procedures and fairness and equity of treatment of candidates. The dean does not vote on review committee recommendations but provides a separate recommendation to the provost.

Faculty members appointed to serve on the university-level promotion and continued appointment committee are encouraged to observe the deliberations of the University Libraries review committee to better prepare for their roles but should not participate or attempt to influence the review committee's recommendations.

The library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) makes a recommendation on each candidate to the dean of University Libraries, including a written evaluation that assesses the quality of the candidate's performance in each relevant area. The division of the vote is conveyed to the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee and the provost but must otherwise remain confidential outside the review committee. In the absence of a unanimous recommendation, a minority report may be included. Whenever the dean does not concur with the committee's recommendation, the committee is so notified.

Evaluation for continued appointment is mandated in the sixth year of probationary service unless the faculty member has given written notice of resignation from the faculty. If the review committee feels that the faculty member's record does not warrant a continued appointment, there is an automatic review of the candidate's dossier by the dean of University Libraries. If the dean concurs, the faculty member is notified by the dean, in writing, of the decision and the specific reasons for it.

The review committee may ask the candidate to appear before the committee to present additional information or clarification of recommendations.

#### **4.4.4 Review and Recommendations by the Dean of University Libraries**

The dean of University Libraries will send forward to the provost the complete dossier of every candidate for whom there is a positive recommendation from either the library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) or the dean, or both. The dean prepares separate letters of recommendation to be forwarded with the dossiers from their department. Whenever the dean does not concur with the library promotion and continued appointment committee's recommendation, the review committee is so notified.

The dossiers that the dean sends to the provost are accompanied by a statement describing the formation and procedures of the review committee and a summary of the number of candidates considered by the University Libraries in each category. The division of the vote is conveyed to the university-level committee and provost but must otherwise remain confidential.

#### **4.4.5 The University-level Committee Evaluation for Promotion and Continued Appointment**

The University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee (university-level committee) is appointed and chaired by the provost or the provost's designee. The university-level committee reviews the qualifications of the candidates recommended for promotion and/or continued appointment by the dean of University Libraries. It also reviews those cases in which the dean does not concur with positive recommendations of the library promotion and continued appointment (review committee's). (A university-level committee review of a case with differing recommendations by the library dean and the review committee is automatic and does not require

an appeal.) The purpose of the review is to verify that the recommendations are consistent with the evidence, reflecting university standards, and that they are consistent with university objectives, programmatic plans, and budgetary constraints.

The university-level committee makes a recommendation on each candidate to the provost. The provost makes recommendations to the president, informing the university-level committee of those recommendations, including the basis for any non-concurrence with the university-level committee's recommendations. The provost informs the president of any variation between the provost's recommendations and those of the university-level committee.

The president makes recommendations to the Board of Visitors. The Board of Visitors makes the final decision.

The provost notifies the dean of any negative decision reached by the provost, the president, or the Board of Visitors. The dean notifies the faculty member, in writing, and notes appeal options.

The University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee (university-level committee) consists of the dean of the University Libraries; three University Library faculty members with continued appointment; and two faculty members at the associate or professor level with tenure in one of the colleges. The provost asks for nominations to the university-level committee from the University Libraries faculty. Where possible, some significant element of faculty choice should be part of the selection procedure.

All members of the university-level committee hold voting privileges. Regardless of the size of the committee, the faculty must always have at least a majority of the potential votes. Consistent with the principle that participants at all levels of the promotion and continued appointment review process vote only once on an individual case, the dean does not vote on cases from the University Libraries. Similarly, faculty members serving on the university-level committee do not vote on any case they previously voted on, should this circumstance occur.

Members of the university-level committee with continued appointment in the University Libraries hold staggered terms of three years; university-level committee members with tenure in a college hold staggered terms of two years; the provost makes the committee appointments. The provost or designee chairs the committee but does not vote.

All voting within the committee should be by written secret ballot; the division of any ballot must remain confidential.

#### **4.4.6 Continued Appointment Decision**

Occasionally faculty members are evaluated for continued appointment during the probationary period, but before the final probationary year. In such a case, there is no recourse to appeal or review of a negative decision, at whatever level it is reached, because of the certainty that the evaluation will be undertaken again within a limited time.

If a faculty member is denied continued appointment in a mandatory review by both the library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) and the dean of University Libraries, the faculty member may appeal the negative decision in writing in accordance with provisions of this section.

The appeal is submitted to the provost for review by the University-level Committee for Promotion and Continued Appointment, which shall make a recommendation to the provost for a final

decision. No further appeal is provided. The University-level Committee for Promotion and Continued Appointment may choose to hear oral arguments. Substantive procedural violations may be addressed through the grievance process described in chapter four of this handbook, “Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures.”

Should the University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee find reason to believe that the review committee’s evaluation was biased or was significantly influenced by improper considerations, the University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee may request that the dean form a new ad hoc review committee. The ad hoc committee makes a recommendation to the University-level Committee for Promotion and Continued Appointment that requested its formation. The University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee then makes a recommendation to the provost.

Should the provost not concur with a positive recommendation from the University-level Committee for Promotion and Continued Appointment, whether that recommendation culminates a usual review or an appeal, the faculty member is so notified in writing of the specific reason for the decision. The faculty member may appeal to the [Faculty Senate Review Committee](#). That committee investigates the case and, if the differences cannot be reconciled, makes a recommendation to the president on the matter. The president’s decision is final.

#### **4.4.7 Promotion Consideration and Decision**

There is no specification for minimum or maximum time of service in any rank. A faculty member may request at any time consideration for promotion in rank if the library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) has not chosen to undertake such an evaluation.

However, appeal of a negative promotion decision is provided only if the faculty member has been in rank for at least six years and if the faculty member has formally requested, in writing, consideration for promotion in a previous year. Candidates for promotion who have been denied by both the review committee and the dean of University Libraries may appeal to the provost, who asks the University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee to consider the appeal. The faculty member presents the appeal in writing as specified in chapter four of this handbook, “Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued Appointment, or Promotion.” The university-level committee makes recommendations to the provost. If the university-level committee and the provost concur with the negative decision, the decision is final; if not, the president makes a final decision.

#### **4.4.8 Review of Progress Toward Promotion to Professor**

Faculty awarded continued appointment at the rank of assistant or associate professor are required to go through at least one review of progress toward promotion. The review is required for faculty members promoted and awarded continued appointment during 2019-2020 and thereafter.

This review will take place by the fifth year after continued appointment, or the last promotion was awarded. The faculty member can elect to submit a review prior to the fifth-year deadline; otherwise by the fifth year the faculty member will receive a notice to submit a review. All reviews of progress towards promotion will be conducted by the library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee). The review committee will provide a recommendation letter to the candidate prior to the next promotion and continued appointment review cycle.

Candidates undergoing a review of progress towards promotion will submit to the library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) documentation based on [University Libraries policies](#) highlighting the contributions and service since continued appointment or the last promotion was awarded. The review committee will provide feedback focusing on the faculty member's progress toward promotion. The developmental guidance should focus on recommended future activities and plans that will position the faculty member for promotion. Review committee recommendation letters will be in writing; the faculty member will acknowledge receipt by signing and returning a copy of the letter to the personnel officer for departmental file. In addition, the faculty member may request a meeting with the review committee to discuss the review and recommendations. Individual faculty members are also encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior colleagues and/or supervisor(s).

#### **4.4.9 Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued Appointment, or Promotion**

A faculty member who is notified of a negative decision following evaluation for a term reappointment during the probationary period, for continued appointment, or for promotion may appeal for review of the decision under conditions and procedures specified in this section. The appellant has a right to an explanation of the reasons contributing to the denial.

Such an appeal must be filed, in writing, within 14 calendar days of formal notification of the decision, which shall refer to appeal procedures. The appeal can only be based on the grounds that certain relevant information was not provided or considered in the decision, or that the decision was influenced by improper consideration.

In their recommendations, administrators and committees hearing an appeal should address the standards outlined in the previous paragraph. In particular, they shall not substitute their own judgment on the merits for that of the body or individual that made the decision under appeal. The recommendations should address the allegations in the appeal with specificity and cite appropriate evidence.

Appeals should be resolved as quickly as possible without compromising fairness or thoroughness of review. Whenever possible, the goal should be to achieve a final resolution in time to accommodate the first meeting of the Board of Visitors in the fall semester.

A faculty member who believes that the appeal procedures described in this section have been improperly followed may, at any point, seek advice from the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation and/or file a grievance in accordance with the grievance procedure in chapter four of this handbook, "Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures."

### **4.5 Annual Evaluation and Post-Continued Appointment Review**

#### **4.5.1 Annual Evaluation and Salary Adjustments**

The Board of Visitors delegates the authority to the president or the president's designee for selected faculty appointments and compensation actions as outlined in the Amended Delegation of Authority for Selected Personnel Actions dated June 11, 2024.

The Board of Visitors annually approves a faculty compensation plan, including the authorization of an annual merit process guided by the university's Faculty Handbook and processes provided by the commonwealth. The faculty compensation plan provides information about the promotion and tenure process; the annual evaluation and salary adjustment process for teaching and



research (T&R) faculty, administrative and professional (A/P) faculty, and research faculty; salary adjustments within the evaluation period, and the pay structure.

Salary adjustments are based on merit; they are not automatic. Recommendations for salary adjustments originate with the department head or supervisor and are reviewed by the dean, the provost, and the president. Because salary adjustments are determined administratively on an annual basis and based significantly on the quality of the faculty member's response to assigned responsibility, they do not necessarily reflect an accurate measure of the full scope of the faculty member's professional development as evaluated by relevant committees in the tenure and promotion process.

**Annual Faculty Activity Report (FAR).** All faculty are required to report annually on their research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities, as applicable. Guidance on annual faculty reports is provided by department head, supervisor, or administrative unit, as appropriate. Submission of a faculty activity report (FAR) may be required for consideration for a merit adjustment.

Virginia Tech uses an electronic faculty activity data system to collect and manage information about research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities. This system automates the production of annual faculty activity reports, promotion and continued appointment dossiers, and CVs, as well as department or other administrative unit and university level reports. The system also enables deposit and claiming of scholarly works in the [VTechWorks](#) institutional repository and will feed public web profiles using [VT Experts](#). Training for faculty is available through Virginia Tech's [Professional Development Network](#) and for departments on request. Faculty members should consult with their department or supervisor on the use of electronic faculty activity reporting.

All departments are required to have written guidelines outlining the process and criteria used in faculty evaluations. The adoption of such guidelines promotes consistency and transparency in this important aspect of faculty life.

Every faculty member's professional performance is evaluated annually, and written feedback is provided separately from confirmation of any merit adjustments. The process begins with submission of a faculty activity report (FAR). All non-temporary faculty members must submit a FAR annually. These reports form part of the basis for performance evaluations, awarding merit adjustments, and promotion, continued appointment, and post-continued appointment reviews.

The University Libraries dean is responsible for conducting annual faculty evaluations, either independently or in consultation with an appropriately charged committee in accordance with University Libraries procedures. All evaluations must be in writing and include a discussion of contributions and accomplishments in all areas of the faculty member's responsibilities, comments on the faculty member's plans and goals, and any recommendations for improvement or change. Faculty members should receive their written evaluations within 90 days of submission of required materials, and they acknowledge receipt by signing and returning a copy for their University Libraries file, or the electronic equivalent. Acknowledging receipt of the evaluation does not imply agreement. If a faculty member substantially disagrees with the evaluation, he or she may submit a written response to the dean for inclusion in the personnel file.

In addition to their annual evaluation letters, all pre-continued appointment faculty members receive at least two thorough reviews during the six-year probationary period and written feedback

on their progress toward continued appointment by the library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) prior to reappointment.

Faculty members with part-time appointments are reviewed on the annual review cycle used for all faculty members in the department. For the purposes of annual review, the fraction of the appointment must be taken into account when considering the appropriate level of achievement in that year.

#### **4.5.2 Periodic Review of Dean of University Libraries, Unit/Division Supervisors, Senior Administrators**

In addition to an annual performance evaluation, and in accordance with [Policy 6105, "Periodic Evaluation of Academic Deans and Vice Presidents,"](#) the dean of University Libraries is subject to reviews every five years. If the review cannot be conducted in the fifth year as would usually be the case, the provost informs the officers of the University Libraries faculty association as to the reason for the delay. A review may also be initiated at any time by the provost and/or at the request of at least one-third of the continued appointment faculty. In the semester prior to a periodic review, the faculty association will be notified of the review and the association may schedule a meeting with the provost to discuss the upcoming review.

[Policy 6100, "Department Head or Chair Appointments,"](#) outlines the review process for department heads or their equivalent and includes the appropriate unit and/or division supervisors in the University Libraries. In addition, the policy provides guidance on establishing evaluation procedures with general principles so reviews may be conducted consistently and appropriately across the University Libraries for those serving in leadership roles.

The periodic review is designed to support the success of academic units by providing developmental feedback that promotes fair and effective academic leadership. Reappointment of an individual to unit and/or division in the libraries must be preceded by a periodic review conducted in accordance with guidelines outlined in Policy 6105 or in Policy 6100.

#### **4.5.3 University Libraries Minimal Standards**

The University Libraries shall develop, maintain, and publish a statement of minimal standards for satisfactory faculty performance using the following process. [University Libraries standards](#) should be written with the participation of faculty and approved by a vote of the continued appointment-track faculty. Standards developed and approved by the library promotion and continued appointment committee and the dean are then reviewed and approved by the provost. Once approved, the standards are published and available to all faculty members in University Libraries. Revisions of University Libraries also follow these procedures.

The following guidance is provided for the development of University Libraries minimal standards:

The University Libraries should carefully assess and state the overall standards of professional performance and contribution considered minimally acceptable for continued appointment faculty. The University Libraries' evaluation mechanism should allow a distinction between performance that is deficient in one or more areas requiring improvement, and performance that is so seriously deficient as to merit the formal designation "unsatisfactory."

University Libraries' standards should embrace the entire scope of faculty contributions. Expectations recognize differences in faculty assignments within the same department or unit. University Libraries' standards should typically address the individual's skill, effort, and

effectiveness in contributing to all aspects of the instructional mission; the individual's activity in and contributions to the discipline; the individual's contributions to the collective life of the University Libraries and university; and the individual's activity in and contributions to the university's outreach mission.

The University Libraries' statements should affirm support for the basic principles of academic freedom and should express tolerance for minority opinions, dissent from professional orthodoxies, and honest and civil disagreement with administrative actions.

Departmental statements should include the expectation that faculty with continued appointment will adhere to the standards of conduct and ethical behavior as stated in the Faculty Handbook and/or promulgated through other official channels.

#### **4.5.4 Unsatisfactory Performance**

For continued appointment and pre-continued appointment faculty members, failure to meet the minimal obligations and standards the department has stipulated for its faculty results in an "unsatisfactory" rating. Written notification of an unsatisfactory rating and the considerations upon which it was based is given to the faculty member, with a copy to the dean and provost.

A single unsatisfactory evaluation indicates a serious problem, which prompts remedial action. Faculty members may respond in writing with a letter to the appropriate supervisor for inclusion in their personnel file, or they may seek redress through either the reconciliation or grievance procedures. Two successive annual ratings of unsatisfactory performance for a faculty member with continued appointment results in a post- continued appointment review.

#### **4.5.5 Post-Continued Appointment Review**

Nothing in this section should be interpreted as abridging the university's right to proceed directly to dismissal for cause as defined in chapter four of this handbook, "Dismissal for Cause," or the right of individual faculty members to pursue existing mechanisms of reconciliation and redress.

A post-continued appointment review is mandatory whenever a faculty member with continued appointment receives two consecutive annual evaluations of unsatisfactory performance. [Information is located on the University Libraries employment webpage.](#) Annual reviews for years spent on leave without pay are disregarded for the purpose of this calculation. The library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) conducts the review unless the same committee was involved in the original unsatisfactory annual evaluations. In this case, the University Libraries faculty elect a committee to carry out the review function.

Upon recommendation of the dean, a post-continued appointment review may be waived or postponed if there are extenuating circumstances (such as health problems). The purpose of a post-continued appointment review is to focus the perspective of faculty peers on the full scope of a faculty member's professional competence, performance, and contributions to the University Libraries and university missions and priorities.

The faculty member has both the right and the obligation to provide a dossier with all documents, materials, and statements as the faculty member believes are relevant and necessary for the review. Ordinarily, such a dossier includes at least the following: an updated curriculum vitae, the past two or more faculty activity reports, teaching or client assessments, if any, and a description of activities and accomplishments since the last faculty activity report. The faculty member is given a period of no less than four weeks to assemble the dossier for the committee. The dean supplies

the review committee with the last two annual evaluations, all materials that were considered in those evaluations, any further materials deemed relevant, and other materials the committee requests. Copies of all materials supplied to the review committee are given to the faculty member. The faculty member has the right to provide a written rebuttal of evidence provided by the dean.

The review committee weighs the faculty member's contributions to the discipline, the University Libraries, and the university through learning, discovery, and engagement. The burden of proving unsatisfactory performance is on the university. The review committee prepares a summary of its findings and makes a recommendation to the dean and provost. Final action and notification of the faculty member is the responsibility of the dean, with the concurrence of the provost.

The review may result in one of the following outcomes:

**Certification of satisfactory performance.** The library promotion and continued appointment committee (review committee) may conclude that the faculty member's competence and professional contributions are satisfactory to meet the minimal expectations of the University Libraries, thus failing to sustain the assessment of the dean. The review is then complete. An unsatisfactory rating in any subsequent year is counted as the first in any future sequence.

**Certification of deficiencies.** The review committee may concur that the faculty member's competence and/or professional contributions are unsatisfactory to meet the minimal expectations of the University Libraries. The review committee may recommend dismissal for cause, a sanction other than dismissal for cause, or a single period of remediation not to exceed two years.

**Remediation.** If a period of remediation is recommended, the review committee specifies in detail the deficiencies it noted, defines specific goals and measurable outcomes the faculty member should achieve, and establishes a timeline for meeting the goals. The dean meets with the faculty member at least twice annually to review the individual's progress. The dean prepares a summary report for the review committee following each meeting and at the end of the specified remediation period, at which time the review committee either certifies satisfactory performance or recommends dismissal for cause or a sanction other than dismissal for cause following the procedures described below.

**Sanction other than dismissal for cause.** A recommendation by the library review committee to impose a severe sanction, as defined in chapter four of this handbook "Imposition of a Severe Sanction," is referred to the University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee. The university-level committee reviews the case presented by the libraries review committee. The university-level committee provides an opportunity for the faculty member to be heard and determines whether the recommendation is consistent with the evidence. The university-level committee may reject, uphold, or modify the specific sanction recommended by the library Review committee. If the library review committee also recommends imposition of a severe sanction, then the same procedures used for dismissal for cause guide the process. The review conducted by the library review committee satisfies the requirement in step two for an informal inquiry by an ad hoc or standing personnel committee. Thus, in the case of a post- continued appointment review, this step is not repeated.

If a severe sanction is imposed or ultimately rejected, then the post- continued appointment review cycle is considered complete. An unsatisfactory rating in any subsequent year is counted as the first in any future sequence.

**Dismissal for cause.** If dismissal for cause is recommended, the case shall be referred to a properly constituted committee within the libraries which reviews the case and determines whether the recommendation is consistent with the evidence. If the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee upholds the recommendation for dismissal, then the procedures specified in chapter four of this handbook, “Dismissal for Cause,” begin immediately.

#### **4.6 Imposition of a Severe Sanction or Dismissal for Cause\***

\*The procedures specified follow closely, but differ in occasional detail from, the "1976 Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure" approved by Committee A of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

##### **4.6.1 Adequate Cause**

Adequate cause for imposition of a severe sanction or dismissal is related, directly and substantially, to the fitness of faculty members in their professional capacity as teachers and scholars. Imposition of a severe sanction or dismissal will not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom or other rights of American citizens.

**Adequate cause includes:** violation of professional ethics (see chapter two of this handbook, “Professional Responsibilities and Conduct”); incompetence as determined through post-continued appointment review; willful failure to carry out professional obligations or assigned responsibilities; willful violation of university and/or government policies; falsification of information relating to professional qualifications; inability to perform assigned duties satisfactorily because of incarceration; or personal deficiencies that prevent the satisfactory performance of responsibilities (e.g., dependence on drugs or alcohol).

Reason to consider the imposition of a severe sanction or dismissal for cause is usually determined by a thorough and careful investigation by an appropriately charged faculty committee (as in the case of allegations of ethical or scholarly misconduct, or through a post-continued appointment review) or by the relevant administrator (for example, the dean, compliance and conflict resolution officer, internal auditor, or Virginia Tech Police). Generally, these investigations result in a report of findings; some reports also include a recommendation for sanctions. The report is directed to the relevant administrator for action; it is also shared with the faculty member. Imposition of a severe sanction or initiation of dismissal for cause proceedings, if warranted, follows the procedures set forth below.

##### **4.6.2 Imposition of a Severe Sanction**

**Definition and examples.** A severe sanction generally involves a significant loss or penalty to a faculty member such as, but not limited to, a demotion in rank and/or a reduction in salary or suspension without pay for a period not to exceed one year, imposed for unacceptable conduct and/or a serious breach of university policy.

Routine personnel actions such as a recommendation for a below average or no merit increase, conversion from a calendar year to an academic year appointment, reassignment, or removal of an administrative stipend do not constitute “sanctions” within the meaning of this policy. A personnel action such as these may be a valid issue for grievance under procedures defined in the Faculty Handbook.

**Process for Imposing a Severe Sanction.** The conduct of a faculty member, although not constituting adequate cause for dismissal, may be sufficiently grave to justify imposition of a severe sanction. Imposition of a severe sanction follows the same procedures as dismissal for

cause beginning with step one. If the matter is not resolved at the first step, a standing or ad hoc faculty committee conducts an informal inquiry (step two). The requirement for such an informal inquiry is satisfied if the investigation was conducted by an appropriately charged faculty committee (as would be the case with an alleged violation of the ethics or scholarly misconduct policies) and, having determined that in its opinion there is adequate cause for imposing a severe sanction, refers the matter to the administration.

#### **4.6.3 Dismissal for Cause**

The following procedures apply to faculty members with continued appointment, or for dismissal of a continued appointment-track faculty member before the end of the current appointment.

Dismissal is preceded by:

**Step one:** Discussions between the faculty member, dean, and/or provost, looking toward a mutual settlement.

**Step two:** Informal inquiry by a standing (or, if necessary, ad hoc) faculty committee having concern for personnel matters. This committee attempts to affect an adjustment and, failing to do so, determines whether in its opinion dismissal proceedings should be undertaken, without its opinion being binding on the president's decision whether to proceed.

**Step three:** The furnishing by the president (in what follows, the president may delegate the provost to serve instead) of a statement of particular charges, in consultation with the dean. The statement of charges is included in a letter to the faculty member indicating the intention to dismiss, with notification of the right to a formal hearing. The faculty member is given a specified reasonable time limit to request a hearing, that time limit is no less than 10 days.

**Procedures for conducting a formal hearing, if requested:** If a hearing committee is to be established, the president asks the Faculty Senate, through its president, to nominate nine faculty members to serve on the hearing committee. These faculty members should be nominated on the basis of their objectivity, competence, and regard in which they are held in the academic community. They must have no bias or untoward interest in the case and are available at the anticipated time of hearing. The faculty member and the president each have a maximum of two challenges from among the nominees without stated cause. The president then names a five-member hearing committee from the remaining names on the nominated slate. The hearing committee elects its chair.

Pending a final decision on the dismissal, the faculty member is suspended only if immediate harm to him or herself or to others is threatened by continuance. If the president believes such suspension is warranted, consultation takes place with the Faculty Senate Committee on

Reconciliation concerning the propriety, the length, and other conditions of the suspension. Ordinarily, salary continues during such a period of suspension.

The hearing committee may hold joint pre-hearing meetings with both parties to simplify the issues, effect stipulations of facts, provide for the exchange of documentary or other information, and achieve such other appropriate pre-hearing objectives as will make the hearing fair and expeditious.

Notice of hearing of at least 20 days is made in writing. The faculty member may waive appearance at the hearing, instead responding to the charges in writing or otherwise denying the

charges or asserting that the charges do not support a finding of adequate cause. In such a case, the hearing committee evaluates all available evidence and rests its recommendation on the evidence in the record.

The committee, in consultation with the president and the faculty member, exercises its judgment as to whether the hearing is public or private. During the proceedings, the faculty member is permitted to have an academic advisor and legal counsel. At the request of either party or on the initiative of the hearing committee, a representative of an appropriate educational association is permitted to attend the hearing as an observer.

A verbatim record of the hearing is taken.

The burden of proof that adequate cause exists rests with the university.

The hearing committee grants adjournment to enable either party to investigate evidence about which a valid claim of surprise is made. The faculty member is afforded an opportunity to obtain necessary witnesses and documentary or other evidence. The administration cooperates with the hearing committee in securing witnesses and evidence. The faculty member and administration have the right to confront and cross-examine all witnesses. The committee determines the admissibility of statements of unavailable witnesses and, if possible, provides for interrogatories.

The hearing committee is not bound by strict rules of legal evidence and may admit any evidence that is of probative value in determining the issues involved. Every effort is made to obtain the most reliable evidence available.

The findings of fact and the recommendation are based solely on the hearing record. The university president and the faculty member are notified of the recommendation in writing and are given a written copy of the record of the hearing.

If the hearing committee concludes that adequate cause for dismissal has not been established, it so reports to the university president. In such a case, the committee may recommend sanctions short of outright dismissal or may recommend no sanctions. If the university president rejects the recommendation, the hearing committee and the faculty member are so informed in writing, with reasons, and each is given an opportunity for response.

**Appeal to the Board of Visitors.** If the university president decides to impose dismissal or other severe sanction, whether that is the recommendation of the hearing committee, the faculty member may request that the full record of the case be submitted to the Board of Visitors (or a duly constituted committee of the board). The board's review is based on the record of the committee hearing, and it provides opportunity for argument, written or oral or both, by the principals at the hearing or their representatives. If the recommendation of the hearing committee is not sustained, the proceeding returns to the hearing committee with specific objections. The hearing committee then reconsiders, taking into account the stated objections and receiving new evidence if necessary. The board makes a final decision only after studying the hearing committee's reconsideration.

**Notice of Dismissal.** In cases where gross misconduct is decided, dismissal is usually immediate. The standard for gross misconduct is behavior so egregious that it evokes condemnation by the academic community generally and is so utterly blameworthy as to make it inappropriate to offer additional notice or severance pay. The first faculty committee that considers the case determines gross misconduct. In cases not involving gross misconduct: (a) a faculty

member with continued appointment receives up to one year of salary or notice, and (b) a probationary faculty member receives up to three months' salary or notice. These terms of dismissal begin at the date of final notification of dismissal.

#### **4.7 Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures**

The following procedure is provided as the means for resolution of grievances against a supervisor or member(s) of the university administration brought by members of the University Libraries faculty with continued appointment or on the continued appointment-track. [The Faculty Senate Review Committee](#) conducts the step four hearing if requested.

##### **4.7.1 Ombuds, Mediation Services, and Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation**

**Informal Dialogue:** It should be possible to resolve most faculty concerns or complaints through informal communication among colleagues working together in the academic enterprise. Accordingly, a faculty member who feels he or she has a grievance is encouraged to take it to the immediate supervisor in the collegial spirit of problem solving rather than as a confrontation between adversaries.

**University Ombuds.** Any member of the university community may visit the [Virginia Tech Office of Interactive Communication and Empowerment \(VOICES\)](#) university Ombuds Office. The Ombuds listens and explores options for addressing and resolving concerns or complaints. The Ombuds Office does not have the authority to make decisions or to reverse any decision made or actions taken by university authorities. The Ombuds Office supplements, but does not replace, the university's existing resources for conflict resolution and its systems of review and adjudication.

Communications with the Ombuds Office are considered confidential. The Ombuds Office will not accept legal notice on behalf of the university, and information provided to the Ombuds Office will not constitute such notice to the university. Should someone wish to make the university formally aware of a particular problem, the Ombuds Office can provide information on how to do so. The only exception to this pledge of confidentiality is where the Ombuds Office determines that there is an imminent risk of serious harm, or if disclosure is required by law.

To preserve independence and neutrality, the Ombuds Office reports directly to the president. The Ombuds Office does not keep permanent records of confidential communications.

**Reconciliation.** At the initiation of the grievance procedure, or at any earlier time, the grievant may request the assistance of the [Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation](#) in fashioning an equitable solution. Contacting the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not required in filing a grievance, but it may be useful if the grievant feels that the issue may be amenable to, but will require time for, negotiation; or if the grievant is unsure whether the concern is a legitimate issue for a grievance; or if personal relations between the parties involved in the grievance have become strained. Contact [Faculty Affairs in the provost's office for information on Reconciliation.](#)

For a potential grievance issue to qualify for consideration by the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, the grievant contacts the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation within 30 calendar days of the time when the grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is the basis for the potential grievance, just as if beginning the grievance process. If the grievant requests assistance from the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, that committee must request a postponement of the time limits involved in the grievance procedure



while it deals with the case. The chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation submits the request in writing to the vice provost for faculty affairs. Also, the grievant reaches an understanding with the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation of the time frame planned for that committee's work on the case, such time not to exceed 60 calendar days.

Faculty members may also consult the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation about serious disagreements with immediate supervisors or other university administrators concerning issues that may not be eligible for consideration within the grievance process. In such instances, the committee contacts the relevant administrator to determine if there is an interest and willingness to explore informal resolution of the dispute; it is not necessary to notify the office of the provost. Information on the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is on the Faculty Senate website.

**Mediation.** Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process through which trained neutral third persons (mediators) assist people to express their concerns and develop solutions to the dispute in a safe and structured environment. Assistance with mediation is available through the [Office for Equity and Accessibility](#). Because mediation is voluntary, both parties must agree to participate in order for mediation to occur. Faculty members and supervisors are encouraged to consider using mediation to resolve disputes or to help address a conflict between a faculty member and another member of the Virginia Tech community.

**Role of Mediators.** Mediators do not make judgments, determine facts, or decide the outcome; instead, they facilitate discussion between the participants, who identify the solutions best suited to their situation. No agreement is made unless and until it is acceptable to the participants.

**Requesting Mediation.** Mediation is available at any time, without the filing of a grievance. Additionally, mediation may be requested by any party during the grievance process prior to step four. If, after the initiation of a formal grievance, both parties agree to participate in mediation, the grievance is placed on administrative hold until the mediation process is complete. If the parties come to a resolution of the dispute through mediation, the parties are responsible to each other for ensuring that the provisions of the agreement are followed. If the parties are not able to reach a mutual resolution to the dispute through mediation, the grievant may request that the grievance be reactivated, and the process continues.

Mediation differs from reconciliation in that mediators do not engage in fact-finding or in evaluation of decisions. Both mediation and reconciliation, however, are voluntary; no party is required to participate in either process.

#### **4.7.2 The Formal Grievance Procedure**

If the assistance of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not desired or is not requested; or if the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation determines that it cannot provide assistance in the matter; or if the grievant finds that the length of time the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation plans or takes with the case is excessive; or if the grievant is not satisfied with the recommendations of that committee, the grievant may pursue the issue as a formal grievance through the following procedure. Appropriate supervisors, deans, directors, and other administrative faculty will cooperate with the grievant in the mechanics of processing the grievance, but the grievant alone is responsible for preparation of the case. [A grievance form is available on the Faculty Affairs Faculty Forms webpage.](#)

**Step one.** The grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor within 30 calendar days of the date that grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is basis for the grievance

and orally identifies the grievance and the grievant's concerns. The supervisor provides an oral response to the grievant within five weekdays following the meeting. If the supervisor's response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

**Step two.** If a satisfactory resolution of the grievance is not achieved by the immediate supervisor's oral response, the grievant may submit a written statement of the grievance and the relief requested to the immediate supervisor. This statement must be on the faculty grievance form, must define the grievance and the relief requested specifically and precisely, and must be submitted to the immediate supervisor within five weekdays of the time when the grievant received the immediate supervisor's oral response to the first step meeting. Faculty grievance forms are available on the provost's website.

Within five weekdays of receiving the written statement of the grievance, the immediate supervisor, in turn, gives the grievant a written response on the faculty grievance form, citing reasons for action taken or not taken. If the written response of the immediate supervisor is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

**Step three.** If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response by the immediate supervisor is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance to the next level of university administration by checking the appropriate place on the faculty grievance form, signing and sending the form to the next level administrator within five weekdays of receiving the written response from the immediate supervisor. The next level of administration for faculty in the University Libraries is usually the University Libraries dean. The administrator involved at this next level is hereafter referred to as the second-level administrator.

Following receipt of the faculty grievance form, the second-level administrator or designated representative meets with the grievant within five weekdays. The second-level administrator may request the immediate supervisor of the grievant be present; the grievant may similarly request that a chosen representative from among the university faculty be present. Unless the grievant is represented by a member of the faculty who is also a lawyer, the second-level administrator does not have legal counsel present. The second-level administrator gives the grievant a written decision on the faculty grievance form within five weekdays after the meeting, citing reasons for the decision. If the second-level administrator's written response to the grievance is satisfactory to the grievant it ends the matter.

**Step four.** If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response from the second-level administrator is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance within five weekdays to the level of the provost, including consideration by an impartial hearing panel of the Faculty Senate Review Committee of the Faculty Senate. Information about the Faculty Senate Review Committee is in chapter two of this handbook and on the Faculty Senate website.

Upon receiving the faculty grievance form requesting step four review, the provost, or appropriate designated representative, acknowledges receipt of the grievance within five weekdays and forwards a copy of the Procedures of the Faculty Senate Review Committee.

The provost immediately forwards a copy of the grievance to the president of the Faculty Senate, who also writes to the grievant to acknowledge receipt of the grievance within five weekdays of receipt of the faculty grievance form from the provost.

The grievant may petition the provost to bypass the Faculty Senate Review Committee and rule on the grievance. If the provost accepts the request, there is no subsequent opportunity for the grievance to be heard by a hearing panel. The provost's decision, however, may be appealed to the university president, as described in step five. If the provost does not accept the petition, the Faculty Senate Review Committee hears the grievance as outlined in these procedures.

The Faculty Senate Review Committee does not normally consider the subject of a grievance while it is simultaneously under review by another committee or panel of the university.

**Hearing Panel.** A hearing panel consists of five members appointed by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee from among the members of the Faculty Senate Review Committee. The chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee polls all appointees to ensure that they have no conflict of interest in the case. Both parties to the grievance may challenge one of the appointments, if they so desire, without need to state cause, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee appoints the needed replacement or replacements. Other replacements are made only for cause. The chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee rules on issues of cause.

To ensure uniformity in practice, the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee or designee serves as the non-voting chair of each hearing panel. In the event that the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee has a conflict of interest concerning a case, the chair appoints a disinterested third party from among the members of the Faculty Senate Review Committee not already appointed to the hearing panel for the case to serve as chair of the hearing panel.

**Hearings.** After a hearing panel is appointed, the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee requests that each party to the grievance provide relevant documentation to be shared among the parties and the hearing panel. The panel holds its initial hearing with both principals present within 15 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Faculty Senate president. If the panel feels it needs to investigate the case further, or requires more information, or desires to hear witnesses, the hearing is adjourned until the panel completes the necessary work or scheduling. The hearing is then reconvened as appropriate.

Each party to the grievance may have a representative present during the sessions of the hearing at which testimony is presented. The representative may speak on their behalf if so requested. Representatives may be legal counsel, if both parties are so represented, but if the grievant does not wish to have legal counsel at a hearing, neither party to the grievance may have legal counsel present.

These impartial panel hearings are administrative functions, not adversarial proceedings. Therefore, if legal counsel is present, they must understand that the proceedings do not follow courtroom or trial procedures and rules. Participation by legal counsel is at the invitation of the parties they represent and is subject to the rulings of the chair of the hearing panel. Detailed procedures followed in hearings are specified in the Procedures of the Faculty Senate Review Committee as approved by the Faculty Senate.

**Findings and Recommendations.** The hearing panel concludes its work and makes its recommendations within 45 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Faculty Senate president. The time limit for consideration may be extended by agreement of both parties.

The hearing panel formulates written findings and recommendations regarding disposition of the grievance and forwards copies to the provost, the grievant, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee.

**Provost's Action.** The provost meets with the grievant within 10 weekdays after receiving the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel to discuss the case and advise the grievant about the prospects for disposition of the case. Within 10 weekdays of that meeting, the provost sends to the grievant the decision in writing concerning the disposition of the grievance. If the provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendations of the hearing panel, that ends the matter.

**Step five.** If the provost's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendations of the hearing panel, the grievant may appeal in writing to the university president within 20 calendar days. The president acts as he or she sees fit. The president's decision is final.

#### **4.7.3 Timeliness of Grievance and Procedural Compliance**

A grievance must be brought forward in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of the grievant to initiate the grievance process within 30 calendar days of the time when he or she knew or should have known of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. The university administration is not required to accept a grievance for processing if the grievant does not meet the 30-day deadline, except in cases of demonstrated good cause.

Scheduled commitments made prior to the time of filing or advancement of a grievance that preclude action by either of the parties to the grievance automatically extend time limits for their duration unless this would be demonstrably harmful to the fair processing of the grievance. In such cases, on written request by the grievant to the appropriate office for that step, the grievance is advanced to the next step in the grievance process.

If the grievant does not follow the time limits specified in the grievance procedure it is assumed that he or she accepted the last proposed resolution as satisfactory. If the grievant desires to advance the grievance after the appropriate specified time limits have lapsed, the administrator who receives the late submission notifies the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee in writing, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee determines if there was good cause for the delay. If so, the grievance proceeds. If not, the process ends with the most recently proposed resolution in force. The finding on the matter by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee is communicated to both parties in writing.

If either party to a grievance charges the other with procedural violations other than time limit issues, a special committee of the president of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee (or the vice president of the senate if the president is also chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee) is convened to rule on the question, as in disputes about the validity of issues qualifying for the grievance procedure. The special committee has the following options. It can either find no significant procedural violation occurred, in which case the grievance process continues unaffected, or that a significant procedural violation did occur. If the administrator committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance automatically qualifies for advancement to the next step in the grievance process. If the grievant committed a significant procedural violation, the

grievance process ends at that point with the last proposed resolution established as the final disposition of the case.

#### **4.7.4 Valid Issues for Grievance**

For this process, a grievance is defined as a complaint by a faculty member alleging a violation, misinterpretation, or incorrect application of a policy, procedure, or practice of the university that directly affects the grievant. Some examples of valid issues for filing a grievance are: improperly or unfairly determined personnel decisions that result in an unsatisfactory annual performance evaluation, unreasonable merit adjustment or salary level, or excessive teaching load/work assignments; substantive violations of promotion and continued appointment procedures (see appeal process in chapter four of this handbook, “Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued Appointment, or Promotion”); reprisals; substantive error in the application of policy; and matters relating to academic freedom.

**Issues not open to grievance.** While most faculty disputes with the university administration may be dealt with by this grievance policy, the following issues may not be made the subject of a grievance: determination of policy appropriately promulgated by the university administration or the university governance system; those items falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures (for example, complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment, appeals of non-reappointment, promotion and/or tenure/continued appointment decisions); the contents of personnel and other policies, procedures, rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes; the routine assignment of university resources (e.g., space, operating funds, parking, etc.); usual actions taken, or recommendations made, by administrators or committee members acting in an official capacity in the grievance process; termination of appointment by removal for just cause, non-reappointment, or abolition of position; or allegations of misconduct in scholarly activities.

**Adjudication of disputes on the validity of issues qualifying for consideration under the faculty grievance procedures.** If a university administrator rules that an issue does not qualify for the grievance process, the grievant may write to the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee within five weekdays of receiving such notification and request a ruling from a special committee consisting of the president of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee. The special committee considers the matter (including consultations with both parties if deemed necessary) and rules by majority vote on the admissibility of the matter to the grievance process. This special committee is called together by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee, who also sends a written report of the results of the deliberations of the committee to all parties concerned.

#### **4.7.5 Particular Concerns and Definitions**

Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion make such an agreement. ([An agreement form to extend the grievance response](#) time is available on the provost’s Faculty Forms page.)

Grievances that advance to step four during or close to the summer and/or teaching breaks during the academic year may require some extension of the stipulated time limits. The principals and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee negotiate such an extension. Every effort is made, however, to stay within the stipulated time limits. In case of disagreement, the Faculty Senate president rules on time extension and procedure questions, which might include a hearing conducted by three rather than five panel members, or other recommendations designed to expedite the proceedings while providing peer review of the grievance.

If a faculty member is away from the assigned work location at the time of discovery the event or action is the basis for a grievance, the 30-day period during which the grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor to initiate the grievance process begins when the faculty member returns to the assigned work location. If the date of return causes a delay of such length that the grievance, or its resolution, is not timely, the grievant may submit the grievance in writing to the immediate supervisor (step two), omitting personal meetings until such time as the faculty member returns to the assigned work location.

“Weekdays,” as used in this procedure, include Monday through Friday only and only when those days are not national, state, or religious holidays relevant to the principals in the grievance.

To protect a grievant from undue pressure in the pursuit of a grievance, if a grievant becomes ill and takes sick leave the grievance process stops until such time as the grievant can resume duties. Exceptions to this provision are made at the request of the grievant, but only if the grievant obtains and produces medical certification that proceeding with the grievance will not be harmful to the health of the grievant or exacerbate the ailment that required taking sick leave.

All costs of legal counsel employed by a grievant are borne by the grievant.

If a grievant is employed away from Blacksburg, and he or she is required to travel away from their duty station in resolution of their grievance, the university pays all travel costs permitted under state regulations.

In the event that a faculty member discovers he or she has a grievance about actions by an administrator above the level of the immediate supervisor that directly involve the faculty member, or with actions by an administrator not in the department or unit that directly involve the faculty member, the grievant initiates the grievance process by seeking the intervention of the immediate supervisor within 30 calendar days of the discovery of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. If that effort does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, the grievant, after consulting the immediate supervisor, may file the faculty grievance form at the appropriate level or with the appropriate administrative office to initiate response from the administrator perceived as the source of the action causing the grievance. The grievance process then proceeds from that level onward in the usual fashion.

A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the provost is managed by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee and a impartial hearing panel, but the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel are sent to the university president for ruling, rather than to the provost. A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the university president is addressed by a special panel appointed by the provost in consultation with the president of the Faculty Senate.

Any final resolution of a grievance must be consonant with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and university policy.

Once a grievance is resolved, either to the satisfaction of the grievant, or if not to the satisfaction of the grievant, by the action of the provost in consonance with the hearing panel recommendations, or by the ruling of the president, that specific grievance is closed and may not be made the subject of another grievance.

#### 4.7.6 Overview of the Formal Grievance Process for Faculty with Continued Appointment or on the Continued Appointment-Track

Below is an abbreviated overview of the grievance process and deadlines. Refer to chapter four of this handbook “The Formal Grievance Procedure,” for specific details and options available in each step of the grievance process.

Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion are the makers of such an agreement. (An agreement [form to extend the grievance response time is available on the provost’s webpage.](#))

Step One	Step Number	Description
Within 30 days of event	1a.	Grievant meets with immediate supervisor.
	1b.	Supervisor provides verbal response.
	1c.	If the supervisor’s response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.
	1d.	If supervisor’s response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step two within 5 weekdays.
Step Two	Step Number	Description
Within 5 weekdays	2a.	Grievant submits written grievance to immediate supervisor.
	2b.	Supervisor responds in writing on grievance form.
	2c.	If the supervisor’s response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.
	2d.	If the supervisor’s response is not satisfactory to the grievant, move to step three within 5 weekdays.
Step Three	Step Number	Description
Within 5 weekdays	3a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the second-level administrator (usually dean of University Libraries).
	3b.	Dean meets with grievant; dean may request department to be present.
	3c.	Dean responds in writing on grievance form.
	3d.	If the dean’s written response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

	3e.	If the dean's written response is not satisfactory to the grievant, move to step four within 5 weekdays.
<b>Step Four</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	4a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the provost.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	4b.	Provost acknowledges receipt of grievance and forwards copy to Faculty Senate president to receive recommendation of an impartial hearing panel of the Faculty Senate Review Committee.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	4c.	Faculty Senate president acknowledges in writing to grievant that copy of grievance has been received from provost.
<b>Within 15 weekdays</b>	4d.	Faculty Senate Review Committee chair appoints hearing panel from among Faculty Senate Review Committee members; panel holds its initial meeting with both principals.
<b>Within 45 weekdays</b>	4e.	The hearing panel concludes its work and makes recommendations to the provost and the grievant.
<b>Within 10 weekdays</b>	4f.	Provost meets with grievant.
<b>Within 10 weekdays</b>	4g.	The provost notifies the grievant in writing of the decision.
	4h.	If the provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendation of the hearing panel that ends the matter.
	4i.	If the provost's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendation of the hearing panel, move to step five within 20 calendar days.
<b>Step Five</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 20 calendar days</b>	5a.	Grievant appeals in writing to university president.
	5b.	The university president's decision is final.



## 4.8 Research Leaves

Information on faculty research leaves is on the [Research Leaves webpage](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs website.

**Study-Research Leave.** Study-research leave may be granted to faculty members for research and/or advanced study necessary to enhance the competencies of those faculty members to conduct their obligations to the university. (At other universities, this program is often called "sabbatical.") [Research leave request form is available on the provost's webpage.](#)

Full-time faculty members holding continued appointment with significant responsibility for instruction and scholarly productivity, with the rank of assistant professor or higher, having accrued a minimum of six years of service, are eligible for study-research leave. Requests may be submitted prior to completion of six years of service, but faculty members must have continued appointment and have completed the sixth year before the leave period begins.

Following such a leave, an additional six years of full-time service are necessary before a faculty member is eligible for another leave. Time spent on study-research leave, educational leave, or leave without pay is not considered in compiling minimum service requirements for further leaves.

As part of the commonwealth's educational leave program, recipients of study-research leaves are provided with partial salary (not to exceed one-half salary). Full employee benefits remain in force while faculty members are on study-research leaves. Calendar year faculty on study-research leave earn annual leave at a rate of half their usual annual leave earnings.

Instead of a proposal for leave of an entire academic or calendar year, faculty members may propose a sequence of semester leave periods at half-salary over several years, not to exceed in total one academic year (for a faculty member on academic year appointment) or 12 months (for a faculty member on calendar year appointment). If such a sequence of leaves is undertaken, all intervening periods of full-time appointment at Virginia Tech accrue toward the six-year minimum service required before eligibility for another study-research leave or sequence of leaves.

Alternatively, following completion of any study-research leave, faculty members may propose a single semester of study-research leave at half-salary following three years of full-time service to the university.

Recipients of a study-research leave may receive additional compensation from other approved sources up to a total equal to their annual salary from the university. Faculty members may receive an additional half salary from sponsored grants or contracts, resulting in a one-year period at full salary from university sources; the appropriate level of effort must be expended on grant-related activities. They may also obtain additional funds from external sources to cover expenses for travel, research, administrative assistance, and the purchase of relevant materials. The appropriate supervisor and provost review and approve required documentation of all external earnings and expected payments. Engagement in consulting activities must be consonant with existing university policy.

The request for study-research leave is made in the fall and, if approved, is taken the following academic year. Requests for study-research leave are submitted to the appropriate supervisor by November 1 for processing through the University Libraries, provost, and consideration by the Board of Visitors at their spring (usually March). Requests are forwarded to the board, subject to recommendation of the appropriate supervisor, dean, and the provost, with consideration of the

need for effective continuation of the University Libraries' program. [Deadlines](#) are established annually and available on the provost's Faculty Affairs Research Leaves webpage.

**Changes not requiring approval by the Board of Visitors.** Listed below are changes to an approved study research leave that require department or school, college and provost approval but do not require additional review by the Board of Visitors:

- Postponement of study-research leave for up to 1 year;
- Change from a full year study-research leave to a half-year leave (or vice-versa);
- Change in the location of the study-research leave;
- Cancellation of study-research leave.

The faculty member returns to full-time service with the university for a minimum of at least one academic year at the end of the approved leave or repays the university the salary received plus interest. If less than this required period of service is met, repayment is required of the pro rata portion of the compensation provided by the university during the leave period. Before undertaking the leave, the faculty member signs a memorandum of agreement to this effect.

Within 60 days of returning to full-time status, the faculty member must send a letter to the provost, dean, and appropriate supervisor summarizing accomplishments.

**Research Assignment.** Information on faculty research leaves is on the [Research Leaves webpage](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs website.

Research assignment is a special category of study-research leave that is awarded to a faculty member with continued appointment for one semester of intensive study or research that increases the quality of the individual's professional stature and future contribution to the university. It may be taken in lieu of an ordinary year-long study-research leave.

Full-time faculty members holding continued appointment with the rank of assistant associate professor or higher and having accrued a minimum of six years of service, are eligible for research assignment. Following such a leave, an additional six years of full-time service are necessary before a faculty member may be considered for another research assignment. Requests may be submitted prior to completion of six years of service, but faculty members must have completed the sixth year before the leave period begins. Faculty members on calendar year appointments may take research assignment leave for up to six months.

Approval for research assignment provides the faculty member with full salary and related benefits for the period of the leave; faculty members may not take on additional responsibilities for outside income except as allowed by the university's consulting policy. Modest stipends associated with competitive visiting scholar programs at other institutions, competitive national or international fellowships, the Fulbright Scholar Program, and similar prestigious opportunities to support study and/or scholarly research may be approved where there is clear benefit to the faculty member and the university. Similarly, externally funded reimbursements or allotments for travel, temporary relocation, and other expenses associated with the proposed research assignment may be approved. Documentation of all external earnings and expected payments is required and must be reviewed and approved by the department head, supervisor, dean, and provost.

When a faculty member proposes a period of paid employment greater than 50% of the annual salary in a corporate or governmental setting, leave without pay or a contract through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act may be more appropriate than a research assignment.

The primary privilege of a research assignment is entire relief from faculty duties for one semester. A secondary privilege is that the assignment may be carried out at any location approved by the dean, although research programs that require facilities, resources from the University Libraries, or collaborations not available at the university are given special consideration.

An application for research assignment is submitted to the appropriate department head or supervisor by November 1 of the academic year preceding that in which the research assignment will be made. The application is in the form of a letter, which includes a detailed description of the proposed research or other scholarly project, the location of that activity, and the relevance of the proposed activity in contributing to the faculty member's own scholarly research program.

The department head or supervisor reviews the application and forwards it with a recommendation to the dean by mid-November indicating the provisions that will be made to accommodate the faculty member's responsibilities.

The dean is expected to weigh fiscal and academic load considerations to assure an equitable distribution of the awards. The dean reviews and forwards research assignment requests to the provost by mid-December. The provost reviews the recommendations, communicates with the dean, and announces the results to each candidate following approval by the Board of Visitors. [Deadlines](#) are established annually and available on the provost's Faculty Affairs Research Leaves webpage.

**Changes not requiring approval by the Board of Visitors.** Listed below are changes to an approved research assignment that require department or school, college and provost approval but do not require additional review by the Board of Visitors:

- Postponement of research assignment for up to 1 year;
- Change from a full year research assignment to a half-year leave (or vice versa);
- Change in the location of research assignment;
- Cancellation of the research assignment.

The faculty member must return to full-time service with the university for a minimum of at least one academic year at the end of the approved leave. If less than this required period of service is met, repayment is required of the pro rata portion of the compensation provided by the university during the leave period. Before undertaking the leave, the faculty member must sign a memorandum of agreement to this effect.

Within 60 days of returning to full-time status, the faculty member must send a letter to the provost, dean, and appropriate supervisor summarizing accomplishments.

#### **4.10 Work-Life Resources for Continued Appointment Track and Continued Appointment Faculty**

Consult [Work-Life Resources](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage including information on dual career program, tenure clock extension, modified duties, caregiving, part-time employment, retirement transition and other university resources.

##### **4.10.1 Dual Career**

Virginia Tech recognizes that meeting the needs of today's professional couples is a key factor in recruiting and retaining new faculty, and that many prospective candidates for faculty positions have spouses or partners who are also seeking employment. Given limited funding, priority will be given to individuals with outstanding faculty credentials where the primary candidate is being

recruited for a tenure-track faculty or senior administrative position. [Guidelines for department heads, chairs, and school directors](#) are available on the provost's Faculty Affairs Work Life Resources webpage. The [Human Resources Dual Career Program](#) page provides additional support for faculty spouses and partners seeking employment in the New River Valley.

#### **4.10.2 Modified Duties**

Consult [Guidance on Paid Parental Leave and Modified Duties](#) on the provost's Faculty Affairs Work-Life Resources webpage. The modified duties program recognizes the need for tenured and tenure track faculty members with special family circumstances to construct a modified workload and flexible schedule for a defined period of time. The faculty member works with the department head, chair, or school director on a modified schedule usually for one semester. In some cases, the Provost's Office may provide funding to allow the buyout of a faculty member's teaching to facilitate the modified schedule.

#### **4.10.3 Tenure Clock Extension. Extension of the Probationary Period**

Consult Tenure Clock Extension on the provost's Faculty Affairs [Work-Life Resources](#) webpage. A one-year probationary period extension shall be automatically granted to either parent (or both, if both parents are tenure-track or continued appointment-track faculty members). An extension of the probationary period may also be approved on a discretionary basis for other extenuating non-professional circumstances that have had a significant impact on the faculty member's productivity. The request should be made within a year of the child's arrival in the family. A probationary period extension is granted in one-year increments.

#### **4.10.4 Voluntary Transitional Retirement Program (VTRP)**

[Policy 4410 Voluntary Transitional Retirement Program](#) outlines a program to assist the university's tenured and continued appointment faculty in their transition from full-time active service to retirement and, in some cases, to facilitate their subsequent part-time re-employment to address staffing needs or to support research efforts. Consult Retirement Transition on the provost's Faculty Affairs [Work-Life Resources](#) webpage.

## CHAPTER FIVE - NON-TENURE-TRACK INSTRUCTIONAL FACULTY

### 5.0 Employment Policies for Non-Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty

Non-tenure-track faculty members fill critical roles in the learning, discovery, and engagement missions at Virginia Tech. They complement the efforts and qualifications of tenure-track faculty, provide access to specialized faculty resources, and allow flexibility to address programmatic needs. As valuable contributors to departmental, school, and institutional missions, they are entitled to fair treatment and compensation, access to professional development opportunities, recognition for their accomplishments, and participation in the life of the university community. The following policies address specific aspects of non-tenure-track instructional faculty appointments. In a few cases, faculty members with an academic rank (assistant, associate, or professor) hold non-tenure-track appointments because of unusual job responsibilities and historical lack of appropriate alternative ranks. Policies in this section also apply to those individuals.

**Authority for use of non-tenure-track positions.** Academic departments and schools retain the authority and responsibility to decide whether to employ non-tenure-track faculty members to deliver aspects of their instructional program. An appropriate standing departmental or school committee, such as a promotion and tenure or executive/personnel committee, establishes the policies and practices related to the use of non-tenure-track ranks. The department head, chair, or school director and dean review and approve the policies and practices.

**Graduate or Professional Degree Required.** Ordinarily a graduate or professional degree is required for appointment to one of these ranks. Appointments are made using established university search procedures. (See chapter two of this handbook “Faculty Search Processes” and the [Human Resources Faculty Recruiting Guidelines](#).)

**Teaching Qualifications.** Non-tenure-track faculty must present credentials appropriate to the level of the course they are teaching. It is the responsibility of the department or school to verify documentation of appropriate teaching credentials prior to the start of the course. (See [Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) page). Any appointment without the relevant terminal degree in the field must be certified by the department or school as appropriately credentialed for the faculty member’s particular instructional assignment in accordance with guidelines for regional accreditation and university policy and procedures.

**Not Eligible for Tenure.** Tenure cannot be awarded to individuals with non-tenure-track appointments.

**Wage Employees.** Non-tenure-track faculty can be employed as wage employees using the university’s P14 form found on the [Human Resources Adjunct Faculty](#) (P14) page. The titles in these series may be used for wage faculty appointments if appropriate for the assignment and credentials of the individuals.

**Full or part-time employment.** The non-tenure-track faculty tracks provide for short- or long-term, full or part-time appointments for individuals who bring specialized expertise to the instructional programs of the university, thereby complementing the qualifications and contributions of tenure-track faculty.

**Participation in Graduate Committees.** Non-tenure-track instructional faculty members with appropriate credentials may serve on graduate advisory committees and interact with graduate

or professional students and interns where relevant to their assignment and with approval of the departmental or school graduate program, department head, chair, or school director and graduate school. A terminal degree, active involvement in research, and approval by the department or school and the graduate school is required to chair a graduate committee. Instructors may not chair a graduate committee.

**Eligibility to Serve as a Principal Investigator.** Faculty members in a non-tenure-track rank may serve as a Principal Investigator for a sponsored project or contract with the approval of the department head, chair, school director, the dean, and the Office of Research and Innovation. A written request for authorization (PI Status Request) may be submitted by the department or school with the approval of the dean to the Office of Research and Innovation.

**Participation in Department, School, University Service and Governance.** Salaried non-tenure-track instructional faculty members are eligible to participate in departmental, school, college, and university committees as appropriate for their assignments. Non-tenure-track faculty members should have meaningful engagement in program planning at the department or school level, especially as it relates to aspects of the curriculum for which they bear teaching responsibility. Although non-tenure-track instructional faculty members cannot be involved in reviewing cases of promotion and tenure for tenure-track or tenured faculty members, they may otherwise be voting members of the departmental or school faculty in accordance with the policy set by individual departmental or school governance.

## **5.1 Non-Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty Series**

### **5.1.1 Visiting Professor**

Appointment to the rank of visiting assistant, associate, or professor is for a restricted period to conduct learning, discovery, and engagement responsibilities within an academic department or school. A visiting faculty member may not serve in such a position beyond six years.

**Service.** Full-time service at this rank may or may not be counted as part of the pre-tenure probationary period if the faculty member is subsequently appointed to a tenure-track position. As with prior service credit from another institution, the decision to include all or some of the years of service from a visiting appointment is at the discretion of the faculty member. However, this decision must be made at the time of appointment to the tenure-track position and documented as part of that initial contract.

### **5.1.2 Adjunct Professor**

Appointment to the rank of adjunct assistant, associate, or professor is reserved for persons whose primary employment is with another agency, organization, educational institution, or with a non-instructional unit of the university. Appointments may be renewed annually.

Adjunct professors are usually compensated as wage employees using the university's P14 form found on the [Human Resources Adjunct Faculty](#) (P14) page.

Wage adjunct faculty members do not typically submit an annual faculty activity report or have an annual evaluation because their employment is temporary. Although wage adjunct faculty may be hired repeatedly to teach a course or courses, they are not considered to be continuing faculty for the purposes of evaluation.

Per-course stipends paid to wage adjunct faculty are not fixed university-wide, but rather are determined on a departmental or school basis. Payments typically reflect the experience and

credentials of the wage adjunct faculty member, the level of demand (market) for the necessary expertise, and general salary levels in the discipline.

### **5.1.3 Professor of Practice Series**

For disciplines where professional preparation of students is a major goal, the involvement of experienced practitioners in teaching the skills and values of the profession, overseeing internships and project experiences, and career advising, for example, are a vital aspect of a successful program. Professional programs often have a deep commitment to the on-going continuing education of practitioners in the field, resulting in a greater commitment to delivery of outreach programs than is typical of a tenure-track appointment outside of Virginia Cooperative Extension. Programs in the arts may wish to attract resident artists or performers for a period of time to contribute to the program. The professor of practice rank series may be appropriate in these and other roles that typically do not reflect the same range of responsibilities required for tenure-track faculty members.

Individuals appointed to these ranks are expected to be successful and effective professionals in a given field. They must be effective teachers of the profession or discipline and they are expected to be able to understand and evaluate the research that applies to their field and teach it to students. While professor of practice faculty members may conduct research and present their findings in professional venues, there are no expectations for an extensive research program as is typical of tenure-track faculty appointments.

Professor of practice faculty members are expected to remain active in their professions in ways that contribute to their assignment—teaching, consulting, or outreach, serving in technical and professional societies and associations, and similar activities.

A record of significant professional achievement is expected for appointment at the associate professor or professor level; initial appointments at such ranks require approval of the appropriate departmental or school committee and head, chair, or school director. Appointment to one of these ranks may be from one to five years and is renewable without limit.

Promotion within these ranks may be pursued through procedures outlined in this section. Service at these ranks is excluded from the pre-tenure probationary period if the faculty member is subsequently appointed to a tenure-track position.

**Assistant Professor of Practice:** Persons appointed at this rank have a graduate or professional degree in the discipline (or a related discipline), professional certification(s) if relevant, and/or significant professional experience. Experience and a demonstrated competence in practice of the profession are expected.

**Associate Professor of Practice:** Persons appointed at the associate professor of practice rank have a graduate or professional degree in the discipline (or a related discipline), professional certification(s) if relevant, and/or significant professional experience. Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a record of significant professional experience and accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment.

**Professor of Practice:** Professor of practice is the capstone rank in the series. Appointment to this rank denotes distinguished professional achievement, and regional, national, or international prominence in the field. Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a record of significant professional experience and accomplishments relevant to the field and type

of assignment. External validation of such accomplishments and leadership in the field is expected at the time of appointment or promotion.

#### **5.1.4 Clinical Faculty Series**

Faculty members with responsibilities primarily in instruction and/or service in a clinical setting such as veterinary or human medicine are considered clinical faculty. Clinical faculty appointments are intended to promote and retain clinical educators and to complement the clinical activities of the university. The clinical faculty track provides for long-term, full-time, or part-time faculty appointments to individuals whose primary responsibilities are in clinical settings and in the instructional programs. While clinical faculty may conduct clinical research and present their findings in professional venues, there are no expectations for an extensive research program as is typical of tenure-track faculty appointments. Time spent in one of these ranks is not applicable toward pre-tenure probationary tenure-track faculty service.

**Clinical Instructor:** Persons appointed to this rank must have the appropriate professional degree. Preference is given to individuals eligible for, or certified by, the most appropriate specialty college or organization recognized by the profession. Appointments at this rank are typically for one year and are renewable.

**Clinical Professor Series.** The clinical professor series is designed for clinical faculty members who have extended appointments and who are expected to interact with graduate or professional students/residents and interns, serving on committees or supervising their training. Appointment to one of these ranks may be from one to five years and is renewable without limit. Usually, a national search is conducted for appointment at one of these ranks.

**Clinical Assistant Professor:** Persons appointed to this rank must have the appropriate professional degree and eligibility for, or certification by, the most appropriate specialty college recognized by the professional organization. Credentials shall be consistent with those for appointment to assistant professor, with an expectation for primary commitment to the instructional and clinical teaching setting.

**Clinical Associate Professor:** Persons appointed to this rank must have the appropriate professional degree and be a diplomate in the appropriate specialty college recognized by their professional organization. Credentials shall be consistent with those for appointment to associate professor, with an emphasis on clinical accomplishments.

**Clinical Professor:** Persons appointed to this rank must have the appropriate professional degree and be a diplomate in the most appropriate specialty college recognized by their professional organization. Credentials shall be consistent with those for appointment to professor, with an emphasis on clinical accomplishments.

Further detail on the duties and responsibilities of these ranks, criteria and the process for promotion, and the terms and conditions of employment for clinical faculty are established by the respective academic department or school and approved by an appropriate college-level committee and the dean.

#### **5.1.5 Collegiate Faculty Series**

Collegiate professors must have a major commitment to the instructional missions of the department or school. The involvement of collegiate professors can include classroom and online teaching, curricular updates, course transformations, and the adoption/integration of innovative



and inclusive pedagogy. Working in collaboration with the department or school's faculty, collegiate faculty may take a lead role in enhancing the curricula and promoting teaching excellence.

Individuals appointed to these ranks are expected to be successful and effective professionals in a given field. They must be effective teachers of the discipline and they are expected to be able to understand and evaluate the research that applies to their field and to teach it to students. Collegiate professor faculty members may conduct research on the scholarship of teaching and learning related to their field and/or on disciplinary topics in their field and present their findings in professional venues, but there are no expectations for an extensive research program as is typical of tenure-track faculty appointments.

Collegiate professor faculty members are expected to remain active in their disciplines and professions in ways that contribute to their assignment—teaching, consulting, or outreach, serving in technical and professional societies and associations, and similar activities.

Collegiate professors are generally appointed to 3-, 5-, or 7-year contracts. Contractual details outlined in the Terms of Faculty Offer (TOFO) may be complemented with a statement of work negotiated between the faculty member and the department head, chair, or school director.

A record of significant scholarly and/or professional achievement is expected for appointment at the associate or professor level; initial appointments at such ranks require approval of the appropriate departmental or school committee and head, chair, or school director. Appointment to one of these ranks is for a specified number of years and is renewable without limit. Performance and promotion evaluations of collegiate professors are performed by department or school and college standing committees where faculty form the majority, such as a promotion and tenure committee or executive/personnel committee.

A collegiate professor in a regular position who receives notice of non-reappointment may request a review of the decision by the college dean. If the dean sustains the non-reappointment decision, the faculty member may request, through the dean, a further and independent review of the decision by the properly constituted college committee on promotion and tenure in accordance with appropriate procedures.

Promotion within these ranks may be pursued through procedures outlined in this section.

**Collegiate Assistant Professor:** Persons appointed at this rank have a terminal graduate or professional degree in the discipline (or a related discipline) and professional certification(s), if relevant. Experience and demonstrated competence in teaching are expected. Appointment to this rank is for three years and is renewable without limit.

**Collegiate Associate Professor:** Persons appointed at the collegiate associate professor rank have a terminal graduate or professional degree in the discipline (or a related discipline) and professional certification(s), if relevant. Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a record of significant instructional experience and accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment. The appointment to this rank is for five years and is renewable without limit.

**Collegiate Professor:** Collegiate professor is the capstone rank in the series. Appointment to this rank denotes distinguished professional achievement, and regional, national, or international prominence in the field. Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a

record of significant instructional experience and scholarly accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment.

External evaluation of such accomplishments and leadership in the field is expected at the time of appointment or promotion. Appointment to this rank is for seven years and is renewable without limit.

### **5.1.6 Instructor Ranks**

Instructors are focused on undergraduate education with minimal or no expectation for development of an independent program of research or scholarship. A master's degree is the usual minimum educational credential for an appointment to the instructor ranks, and generally a minimum of 18 graduate credits teaching in the discipline is required to meet accreditation standards. Instructors with distinctive assignments and work schedules will have these responsibilities conveyed in the Terms of Faculty Offer (TOFO) letter at the time of appointment.

While initial appointment is typically at the entry rank, prior experience may be considered for a recommendation of appointment at a higher rank with the approval of the appropriate departmental or school committee and head, chair, or school director. Up to three years of similar instructional service at another accredited American four-year college or university may be counted toward the designated period required prior to review for promotion in rank.

Faculty members within the instructor ranks may not chair a graduate committee.

**Instructor.** The instructor rank is the initial rank for appointment of a full or part-time faculty member. Primary responsibilities are usually to the instructional program, but assignments vary depending on the faculty member's expertise and experience and departmental or school needs. Typically, they include teaching undergraduate courses, advising students, developing, or revising courses and curricula, and fulfilling other instructional, administrative, or service responsibilities. Appointment at this rank consists of a series of one- or two-year renewable appointments with a minimum of five years of completed service before consideration for promotion.

**Advanced Instructor.** Consideration for promotion to the rank of advanced instructor may be requested by the instructor or recommended by the department or school based on excellence in instructional responsibilities and significant evidence of related professional growth and development. Mentoring colleagues or graduate teaching assistants, student advising, course or curriculum development, or exemplary service or outreach are examples of ways in which instructors can make valuable contributions to the instructional programs in a department or school. Advanced instructors are expected to demonstrate mastery in teaching with significant impact on student learning and the department or school's undergraduate programs. Scholarship and publication are not typically an assigned responsibility of instructor positions, but such accomplishments may be considered as part of the evaluation for promotion. Promotion to the advanced instructor rank is generally accompanied by a renewable three-year contract.

A minimum of five years of completed service at the advanced instructor rank is required before consideration for promotion to senior instructor.

**Senior Instructor.** Senior instructor is the capstone rank in the instructor series and promotion to this rank denotes exemplary instruction, demonstrated continued professional development, and significant contributions to undergraduate education. In addition to teaching courses, senior instructors may have considerable responsibility in mentoring colleagues or graduate teaching

assistants, overseeing course development or special instructional initiatives, student advising, or other responsibilities reflecting their role as instructional leaders. Promotion to the rank of senior instructor is generally accompanied by a renewable five-year contract.

## **5.2 Policies Related to Non-Tenure-Track Instructional Appointments**

### **5.2.1 Initial Appointment**

Non-tenure-track faculty positions are term appointments eligible for renewal based on quality of performance, continuing need for services in the unit, and available funding.

All initial non-tenure-track faculty appointments are usually for a period of one year, including appointments at the more senior ranks. Subsequent reappointments may be multi-year, as appropriate for the rank. Appointments may be regular, restricted, for either a calendar year (CY) or academic year (AY), and full or part-time depending on responsibilities and available funding.

Appointments may be regular, which are renewable term appointments with a presumption or consideration of reappointment.

Restricted appointments may be made for which there is no presumption or consideration of renewal. Restricted appointments are designated with start and end dates in the terms of faculty offer (TOFO).

Visiting and adjunct appointments are intended to be temporary in nature and are almost always restricted.

### **5.2.2 Reappointment**

Non-tenure-track faculty members on restricted contracts whose appointments will be continued are issued a reappointment contract specifying the new ending date for their appointment. Reappointments typically occur on the anniversary of the hire date or are realigned to coincide with the academic year or other relevant appointment cycle.

The practice of issuing repeated one-year restricted contracts for an individual faculty member over many years is explicitly discouraged, as it can be exploitative over an extended time. Therefore, if a faculty member is to be reappointed into a restricted position when the faculty member has spent the preceding five years on restricted contracts, approval must be requested from the provost's office. The request should be supported by documentation demonstrating why the position cannot readily be converted to a regular appointment.

Reappointments for faculty members on regular contracts are usually effective July 1 or August 10, reflecting either calendar year or an academic year appointment. Notice of non-reappointment is in accordance with periods identified in chapter two of this handbook "Retirement, Resignation, and Non-Reappointment."

### **5.2.3 Annual Evaluation and Salary Adjustments**

The Board of Visitors delegates the authority to the president or the president's designee for selected faculty appointments and compensation actions as outlined in the Amended Delegation of Authority for Selected Personnel Actions dated June 11, 2024.

The Board of Visitors annually approves a faculty compensation plan, including the authorization of an annual merit process guided by the university's Faculty Handbook and processes provided by the commonwealth. The faculty compensation plan provides information about the promotion and tenure process; the annual evaluation and salary adjustment process for teaching and

research (T&R) faculty, administrative and professional (A/P) faculty, and research faculty; salary adjustments within the evaluation period, and the pay structure.

**Annual Faculty Activity Report (FAR).** All faculty are required to report annually on their research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities, as applicable. Guidance on annual faculty reports is provided by department, school, college, or administrative unit, as appropriate. Submission of a faculty activity report (FAR) may be required for consideration for a merit adjustment.

Virginia Tech uses an electronic faculty activity data system to collect and manage information about research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities. This system automates the production of annual faculty activity reports, promotion and tenure dossiers, and CVs, as well as department, school, college, and university level reports. The system also enables deposit and claiming of scholarly works in the VTechWorks institutional repository and will feed public web profiles using VT Experts. Training for faculty is available through Virginia Tech's Professional Development Network and for departments on request.

Faculty members should consult with their department head, chair, school director, or supervisor on the use of electronic faculty activity reporting. Continuing faculty members must submit an annual faculty activity report in accordance with departmental or school and college procedures and timelines. Timely submission of the annual faculty activity report is required for consideration for a merit adjustment. Annual evaluation of performance by the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor (or appropriately charged committee) and feedback to the faculty member are required and should be consistent with university policies and practices for annual evaluation of faculty members.

### **5.2.4 Promotion Guidelines**

Non-tenure-track faculty members are eligible for promotion in rank in accordance with guidelines established by academic departments or schools and approved by an appropriate college-level committee and the dean. Such guidelines should outline the process and criteria for promotion in rank; they should be widely available along with other departmental, school, and college documents related to promotion. Faculty members in a regular or restricted appointment may be considered for promotion.

Promotion in rank for any non-tenure-track position is not a requirement of continued employment, or an entitlement for years of service without evidence of exceptional merit, continued professional development, and contribution in the assigned role. An approved promotion in rank is recognized by a change in title, increasing length of appointment contract, and a base salary adjustment as identified in the annual faculty compensation plan approved by the Board of Visitors.

[See provost's Promotion and Tenure resources.](#) Consideration for promotion in rank includes preparation of a dossier using a common university format. Typically, such a dossier includes a statement of professional direction and accomplishment, a complete curriculum vitae, and documentation of contributions associated with the appointment. Colleges and departments or schools may request supplemental materials. The appropriate college committee and dean approve guidelines for dossier development and departmental or school policies and procedures for the promotion process. External review of credentials is required for some –but not all– promotions in non-tenure-track ranks.

The promotion dossier is reviewed at three levels: (1) by an appropriately charged departmental or school committee and the department head, chair, or school director, (2) by an appropriately charged college-level committee and the dean, and (3) by the provost. The department head, chair, or school director and dean make separate recommendations to the subsequent review levels. The provost reviews college and dean recommendations and makes recommendations to the president. The Board of Visitors grants final approval.

Given the wide variation in representation of non-tenure-track instructional appointments some latitude is provided in the nature and make up of department, school and college committees. For example, departments or schools with significant numbers of instructors, the committee charged with reviews would consist of a majority representation of advanced and senior instructors. In departments or schools with very few such appointments, the existing departmental or school promotion and tenure committee may review the dossier(s) and make recommendations. Similarly, at the college level either a special committee may be formed to review promotions of non-tenure-track instructional faculty with majority representation of those in the advanced level of such ranks, or the existing promotion and tenure committees may be assigned such review and recommendation responsibilities.

While the procedures vary to recognize practical issues and varying numbers, the guidelines for review should be in writing and adhered to for consistency and fair treatment of all candidates. A faculty member may not serve on any committee that is evaluating a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship.

Given that promotion decisions do not carry the same “up or out” decision associated with tenure decisions, a negative recommendation on a promotion request need not translate into termination of employment. Indeed, a faculty member may remain at the initial rank if their performance warrants continued employment and serves departmental or school needs. If the promotion request is not supported on the first submission, it may not be appealed until at least a second review has taken place in a subsequent or later year.

A positive recommendation from either or both the departmental or school committee and the department head, chair, or school director automatically advances the dossier to the college committee level. Similarly, at the college level, a positive recommendation from either or both the college committee and the dean results in automatic advancement for consideration by the provost. The decision of the provost is final and cannot be appealed.

Faculty members should be provided with written feedback in the case of a negative recommendation at either the department, school or college level so that they might improve their performance or dossiers for a later submission.

### **5.2.5 Appeals of Decisions on Promotion**

Following a second negative review by both the departmental or school committee and department head, chair, or school director, the decision may be appealed to the college committee, but only on grounds that relevant information was not considered or that the decision was influenced by improper consideration. The appeal must be filed within 14 days of official notification. A negative recommendation from both the college and the dean ends the process. There is no appeal available when both the college committee and dean vote “no.”

Significant procedural violations may be grieved under the faculty grievance process described in this chapter “Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures.”

### **5.3 Termination Procedures for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty on Regular Appointments**

Members of the non-tenure-track faculty may be removed from their position by one of the following three procedures: (1) removal for just cause, (2) non-reappointment, or (3) termination of position because of insufficient funds or no further need for services. Notice of non-reappointment for non-tenure-track instructional faculty members on regular appointments is addressed in chapter two of this handbook "Retirement, Resignation, and Non-Reappointment."

#### **5.3.1 Dismissal for Cause**

Stated causes for removal shall include, but are not limited to, professional incompetence; unacceptable or unsatisfactory performance after due notice; unethical conduct or misconduct that interferes with the capacity of the employee to perform effectively the requirements of the position; violation of university policy; or falsification of credentials, experience, leave reports, or other official university documents.

Filing a grievance shall not constitute just cause for termination.

When it becomes necessary to terminate a non-tenure-track faculty member for unsatisfactory performance prior to the end of the appointment period, the following procedures apply:

**Step one:** The department head, chair, or school director writes a letter to the faculty member detailing the areas of performance that are deficient and setting clear expectations for acceptable performance and continued employment. The college dean receives a copy. The letter states the time period in which the deficiencies must be addressed. This time period will be not less than 30 calendar days.

**Step two:** At the end of that period, the department head, chair, or school director must again write the faculty member with an evaluation of their performance with a copy to the college dean. If performance continues to be unsatisfactory, this second letter may contain a notice of termination. The termination notice will have an effective date of 45 calendar days or more from the date of the second letter. In cases where there is a threat to health or safety, the 45-day period may be waived.

**Dismissal for cause not involving unsatisfactory performance:** For termination for cause for reasons other than unsatisfactory performance, the faculty member shall receive written notification of the reasons for termination and shall be allowed an opportunity to respond within five workdays. With the approval of the provost, a faculty member may be suspended with or without pay pending an investigation into allegations of wrongdoing.

**Appeal to the dean:** The faculty member may appeal notification of dismissal for cause to the college dean and the termination will be held in abeyance until the appeal process is complete. The appeal must be made in writing within five working days of receipt of the notification of termination. The dean must respond in writing within 10 working days.

**Appeal to the provost:** If the dean's response is unsatisfactory to the appellant, an appeal may be made to the provost in writing within five working days. The provost appoints a committee of three members of the general faculty to review the case and make recommendations to the provost. The decision of the provost is final. The above time limits of the appeal process may be altered by extenuating circumstances and the agreement of both parties.

### 5.3.2 Termination of Appointment During the Contract Period

Occasionally a decline in funding resources makes it necessary to terminate an appointment before the end of a contract. While department heads, chairs, or school directors are encouraged to make every effort to assure continuity of employment to individuals performing satisfactorily, there are circumstances in which this may not be possible or in the best interest of the university. Non-tenure-track faculty appointments may be terminated in the case where there are insufficient funds or no further need for services. Written notice of termination will follow the schedule outlined in chapter two of this handbook “Retirement, Resignation, and Non-Reappointment”. A proposed notice of termination during the contract period because of insufficient funds or lack of need for services requires the approval of the dean and provost.

### 5.4 Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures

The following procedure is provided as the means for resolution of grievances against a supervisor or member(s) of the university administration brought by members of the non-tenure-track instructional faculty. The grievance process is the same as that for tenured and tenure-track faculty. The [Faculty Senate Review Committee](#) conducts the step four hearing if requested.

#### 5.4.1 Ombuds, Mediation Services, and Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation

**Informal dialogue:** It should be possible to resolve most faculty concerns or complaints through informal communication among colleagues working together in the academic enterprise. Accordingly, a faculty member who feels there is a grievance is encouraged to take it to the immediate supervisor in the collegial spirit of problem solving rather than as a confrontation between adversaries.

**University Ombuds.** Any member of the university community may visit [the Virginia Tech Office of Interactive Communication and Empowerment](#) (VOICE). The Ombuds listens and explores options for addressing and resolving concerns or complaints. The Ombuds Office does not have the authority to make decisions or to reverse any decision made or actions taken by university authorities. The Ombuds Office supplements, but does not replace, the university's existing resources for conflict resolution and its systems of review and adjudication.

Communications with the Ombuds Office are considered confidential. The Ombuds Office will not accept legal notice on behalf of the university, and information provided to the Ombuds Office will not constitute such notice to the university. Should someone wish to make the university formally aware of a particular problem, the Ombuds Office can provide information on how to do so. The only exception to this pledge of confidentiality is where the Ombuds Office determines that there is an imminent risk of serious harm, or if disclosure is required by law.

To preserve independence and neutrality, the Ombuds Office reports directly to the president. The Ombuds Office does not keep permanent records of confidential communications.

**Reconciliation.** At the initiation of the grievance procedure, or at any earlier time, the grievant may request the assistance of the [Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation](#) in fashioning an equitable solution. Contacting the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not required in filing a grievance, but it may be useful if the grievant feels that the issue may be amenable to, but will require time for, negotiation; or if the grievant is unsure whether the concern is a legitimate issue for a grievance; or if personal relations between the parties involved in the grievance have become strained. Contact [Faculty Affairs in the provost's office for information on Reconciliation.](#)

For a potential grievance issue to qualify for consideration by the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, the grievant must contact the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation within 30 calendar days of the time when the grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is the basis for the potential grievance, just as if beginning the grievance process. If the grievant requests assistance from the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, that committee requests a postponement of the time limits involved in the formal grievance procedure while it deals with the case. The request is submitted in writing to the vice provost for faculty affairs by the chair of the Committee on Reconciliation. Also, the grievant should reach an understanding with the Committee on Reconciliation of the time frame planned for that committee's work on the case, such time not to exceed 60 calendar days.

Faculty members may also consult the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation about serious disagreements with immediate supervisors or other university administrators concerning issues that may not be eligible for consideration within the grievance process. In such instances, the committee contacts the relevant administrator to determine if there is an interest and willingness to explore informal resolution of the dispute; it is not necessary to notify the office of the provost.

Information on the Faculty Senate Reconciliation Committee is in chapter two of this handbook and on the Faculty Senate website.

**Mediation.** Conflict resolution is a voluntary, confidential process through which trained neutral third persons (mediators) assist people to express their concerns and develop solutions to the dispute in a safe and structured environment. Assistance with mediation is available through the [Office for Equity and Accessibility](#). Because mediation is voluntary, both parties must agree to participate for mediation to occur. Faculty members and supervisors are encouraged to consider using mediation to resolve disputes or to help address a conflict between a faculty member and another member of the Virginia Tech community.

**Role of mediators.** Mediators do not make judgments, determine facts, or decide the outcome; instead, they facilitate discussion between the participants, who identify the solutions best suited to their situation. No agreement is made unless and until it is acceptable to the participants.

**Requesting mediation.** Mediation is available at any time, without the filing of a grievance. Additionally, mediation may be requested by any party during the grievance process prior to step four. If, after the initiation of a formal grievance, both parties agree to participate in mediation, the grievance is placed on administrative hold until the mediation process is complete. If the parties come to a resolution of the dispute through mediation, the parties are responsible to each other for ensuring that the provisions of the agreement are followed. If the parties are not able to reach a mutual resolution to the dispute through mediation, the grievant may request that the grievance be reactivated, and the process continues.

Mediation differs from faculty reconciliation in that mediators do not engage in fact-finding or in evaluation of decisions. Both mediation and reconciliation, however, are voluntary; no party is required to participate in either process.

#### **5.4.2 The Formal Grievance Procedure**

If the assistance of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not desired or is not requested; or if that committee determines that it cannot provide assistance in the matter; or if the grievant finds that the length of time the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation plans or takes with the case is excessive; or if the grievant is not satisfied with the recommendations of



that committee, the grievant may pursue the issue as a formal grievance through the following procedure. [A grievance form is available on the provost's webpage.](#) Department heads, chairs, school directors, deans, and other administrative faculty will cooperate with the grievant in the mechanics of processing the grievance, but the grievant alone is responsible for preparation of the case.

**Step one:** The grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor (usually the department head, chair, or school director) within 30 calendar days of the date that grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is basis for the grievance and verbally identifies the grievance and the grievant's concerns. The supervisor provides a verbal response to the grievant within five weekdays following the meeting. If the supervisor's response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

**Step two:** If a satisfactory resolution of the grievance is not achieved by the immediate supervisor's verbal response, the grievant may submit a written statement of the grievance and the relief requested to the immediate supervisor. This statement must be submitted on the faculty grievance form, must define the grievance, and request the relief desired specifically and precisely. The written grievance is submitted to the immediate supervisor within five weekdays of the time when the grievant received the immediate supervisor's verbal response to the first step meeting.

Within five weekdays of receiving the written statement of the grievance, the immediate supervisor, in turn, gives the grievant a written response on the faculty grievance form. The immediate supervisor cites reasons for action taken or not taken. If the written response of the immediate supervisor is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

**Step three:** If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response by the immediate supervisor is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance to the next level of university administration by checking the appropriate place on the faculty grievance form, signing and sending the form to the next level administrator within five weekdays of receiving the written response from the immediate supervisor. The next level of administration for college faculty is usually the college dean. The administrator involved at this next level is hereafter referred to as the second-level administrator.

Following receipt of the faculty grievance form, the second-level administrator or designated representative meets with the grievant within five weekdays. The second-level administrator may request the immediate supervisor of the grievant be present; the grievant may similarly request that a chosen representative from among the university faculty be present. Unless the grievant is represented by a member of the faculty who is also a lawyer, the second-level administrator does not have legal counsel present. The second-level administrator gives the grievant a written decision on the faculty grievance form within five weekdays after the meeting, citing reasons for the decision. If the second-level administrator's written response to the grievance is satisfactory to the grievant it ends the matter.

**Step four:** If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response from the second-level administrator is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance within five weekdays to the level of the provost, including consideration by an impartial hearing panel of the Faculty Senate Review Committee. Information on the Faculty Senate Review Committee is in chapter two of this handbook and on the Faculty Senate website.

Upon receiving the faculty grievance form requesting step four review, the provost, or appropriate designated representative, acknowledges receipt of the grievance within five weekdays and forwards a copy of the Procedures of the Faculty Senate Review Committee to parties in the grievance process. The provost immediately forwards a copy of the grievance to the president of the Faculty Senate, who also writes to the grievant to acknowledge receipt of the grievance within five weekdays of receipt of the faculty grievance form from the provost.

The grievant may petition the provost to bypass the Faculty Senate Review Committee and rule on the grievance. If the provost accepts the request, there is no subsequent opportunity for the grievance to be heard by a hearing panel. The provost's decision, however, may be appealed to the president, as described in step five. If the provost does not accept the petition, the Faculty Senate Review Committee hears the grievance as outlined in these procedures.

The Faculty Senate Review Committee does not normally consider the subject of a grievance while it is simultaneously under review by another committee or panel of the university.

**Hearing panel:** A hearing panel consists of five members appointed by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee from among the members of the Faculty Senate Review Committee. The chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee polls all appointees to ensure that they have no conflict of interest in the case. Both parties to the grievance may challenge one of the appointments, if they so desire, without need to state cause, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee appoints the needed replacement or replacements. Other replacements are made only for cause. The chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee rules on issues of cause.

To ensure uniformity in practice, the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee or their designee serves as the non-voting chair of each hearing panel. In the event that the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee has a conflict of interest concerning a case, the chair appoints a disinterested third party from among the members of the Faculty Senate Review Committee not already appointed to the hearing panel for the case to serve as chair of the hearing panel.

**Hearings:** After a hearing panel is appointed, the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee requests that each party to the grievance provide relevant documentation to be shared among the parties and the hearing panel. The panel holds its initial hearing with both principals present within 15 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Faculty Senate president. If the panel feels it needs to investigate the case further, or requires more information, or desires to hear witnesses, the hearing is adjourned until the panel completes the necessary work or scheduling. The hearing is then reconvened as appropriate.

Each party to the grievance may have a representative present during the sessions of the hearing at which testimony is presented. The representative may speak on their behalf if so requested. Representatives may be legal counsel, if both parties are so represented, but if the grievant does not wish to have legal counsel at a hearing, neither party to the grievance may have legal counsel present.

These impartial panel hearings are administrative functions, not adversarial proceedings. Therefore, if legal counsels are present, they must understand that the proceedings do not follow courtroom or trial procedures and rules. Participation by legal counsel is at the invitation of the parties they represent and is subject to the rulings of the chair of the hearing panel. Hearing procedures can be found on the Faculty Senate website.

**Findings and Recommendations:** The hearing panel concludes its work and makes its recommendations within 45 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Faculty Senate president. The time limit for consideration may be extended by agreement of both parties.

The hearing panel formulates written findings and recommendations regarding disposition of the grievance and forwards copies to the provost, the grievant, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee.

**Provost's action:** The provost meets with the grievant within 10 weekdays after receiving the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel to discuss the case and advise the grievant about the prospects for disposition of the case. Within 10 weekdays of that meeting, the provost sends to the grievant the decision in writing concerning the disposition of the grievance. If the provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendations of the hearing panel that ends the matter.

**Step five:** If the provost's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendations of the hearing panel, the grievant may appeal in writing to the president within 20 calendar days. The president's decision is final.

#### **5.4.3 Timeliness of Grievance and Procedural Compliance**

A grievance must be brought forward in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of the grievant to initiate the grievance process within 30 calendar days of the time of knowledge of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. The university administration is not required to accept a grievance for processing if the grievant does not meet the 30-day deadline, except in cases of demonstrated good cause.

Scheduled commitments made prior to the time of filing or advancement of a grievance that preclude action by either of the parties to the grievance automatically extend time limits for their duration unless this would be demonstrably harmful to the fair processing of the grievance. In such cases, on written request by the grievant to the appropriate office for that step, the grievance is advanced to the next step in the grievance process.

If the grievant does not follow the time limits specified in the grievance procedure, acceptance of the last proposed resolution as satisfactory is assumed. If the grievant desires to advance the grievance after the appropriate specified time limits have lapsed, the administrator who receives the late submission notifies the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee in writing, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee determines if there was good cause for the delay. If so, the grievance proceeds. If not, the process ends with the most recently proposed resolution in force. The finding on the matter by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee is communicated to both parties in writing.

If either party to a grievance charges the other with procedural violations other than time limit issues, a special committee of the president of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee (or the vice president of the senate if the president is also chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee) is convened to rule on the question, as in disputes about the validity of issues qualifying for the grievance procedure. The special committee has the following options. It can either find no significant procedural violation occurred, in which case the grievance process continues unaffected, or that a significant procedural violation did occur. If the administrator committed a

significant procedural violation, the grievance automatically qualifies for advancement to the next step in the grievance process. If the grievant committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance process ends at that point with the last proposed resolution established as the final disposition of the case.

#### **5.4.4 Valid Issues for Grievance**

For this process, a grievance is defined as a complaint by a faculty member alleging a violation, misinterpretation, or incorrect application of a policy, procedure, or practice of the university that directly affects the grievant. Some examples of valid issues for filing a grievance are improperly or unfairly determined personnel decisions that result in an unsatisfactory annual performance evaluation, unreasonable merit adjustment or salary level, or excessive teaching load/work assignments; substantive violations of promotion procedures (see “Appeals of Decisions on Promotion”); reprisals; substantive error in the application of policy; and matters relating to academic freedom.

**Issues not open to grievance.** While most faculty disputes with the university administration may be dealt with by this grievance policy, the following issues may not be made the subject of a grievance: determination of policy appropriately promulgated by the university administration or the university governance system; those items falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures (for example, complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment, appeals of non-reappointment or promotion decisions); the contents of personnel and other policies, procedures, rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes; the routine assignment of university resources (e.g., space, operating funds, parking, etc.); usual actions taken, or recommendations made, by administrators or committee members acting in an official capacity in the grievance process; termination of appointment by removal for just cause, non-reappointment, or abolition of position; or allegations of misconduct in scholarly activities.

**Adjudication of disputes on the validity of issues qualifying for consideration under the faculty grievance procedures.** If a university administrator rules that an issue does not qualify for the grievance process, the grievant may write to the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee within five weekdays of receiving such notification and request a ruling from a special committee consisting of the president of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee. The special committee considers the matter (including consultations with both parties if deemed necessary) and rules by majority vote on the admissibility of the matter to the grievance process. This special committee is called together by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee, who also sends a written report of the results of the deliberations of the committee to all parties concerned.

#### **5.4.5 Particular Concerns and Definitions**

Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion make such an agreement. ([An agreement form to extend the grievance response time is available on the provost’s Faculty Forms page.](#))

Grievances that advance to step four during or close to the summer and/or teaching breaks during the academic year may require some extension of the stipulated time limits. The principals and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee negotiate such an extension. Every effort is made, however, to stay within the stipulated time limits. In case of disagreement, the Faculty Senate president rules on time extension and procedure questions, which might include a hearing

conducted by three rather than five panel members, or other recommendations designed to expedite the proceedings while providing peer review of the grievance.

If a faculty member is away from the assigned work location at the time of discovery of the event or action that is the basis for a grievance, the 30-day period during which the grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor to initiate the grievance process begins when the faculty member returns to the assigned work location. If the date of return causes a delay of such length that the grievance, or its resolution, is not timely, the grievant may submit the grievance in writing to the immediate supervisor (step two), omitting personal meetings until such time as the faculty member returns to the assigned work location.

“Weekdays,” as used in this procedure, include Monday through Friday only and only when those days are not national, state, or religious holidays relevant to the principals in the grievance.

To protect a grievant from undue pressure in the pursuit of a grievance, if a grievant becomes ill and takes sick leave the grievance process stops until such time as the grievant is able to resume duties. Exceptions to this provision are made at the request of the grievant, but only if the grievant obtains and produces medical certification that proceeding with the grievance will not be harmful to the health of the grievant or exacerbate the ailment that required taking sick leave.

All costs of legal counsel employed by a grievant are borne by the grievant.

If a grievant is employed away from Blacksburg and is required to travel away from their duty station in resolution of their grievance, the university pays all travel costs permitted under state regulations.

In the event that a faculty member discovers a grievance about actions by an administrator above the level of the immediate supervisor that directly involves the faculty member, or with actions by an administrator not in the department or school that directly involves the faculty member, the grievant initiates the grievance process by seeking the intervention of the immediate supervisor within 30 calendar days of the discovery of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. If that effort does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, the grievant, after consulting the immediate supervisor, may file the faculty grievance form at the appropriate level or with the appropriate administrative office to initiate response from the administrator perceived as the source of the action causing the grievance. The grievance process then proceeds from that level onward in the usual fashion.

A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the provost is handled by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee and an impartial hearing panel, but the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel are sent to the president for ruling, rather than to the provost. A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the president of the university is dealt with by a special panel appointed by the provost in consultation with the president of the Faculty Senate.

Any final resolution of a grievance must be consonant with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and university policy.

Once a grievance is resolved, either to the satisfaction of the grievant, or if not to the satisfaction of the grievant, by the action of the provost in consonance with the hearing panel recommendations, or by the ruling of the president, that specific grievance is closed and may not be made the subject of another grievance.

### 5.4.6 Overview of the Formal Grievance Process for Non-Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty

Below is an abbreviated overview of the grievance process and deadlines.

Step One	Step Number	Description
Within 30 days of event	1a.	Grievant meets with immediate supervisor (usually department head).
	1b.	Department head provides verbal response.
	1c.	If the department head's response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.
	1d.	If the department head's response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step two within 5 weekdays.
Step Two	Step Number	Description
Within 5 weekdays	2a.	Grievant submits written grievance to department head.
	2b.	Department head responds in writing on grievance form.
	2c.	If the department head's response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.
	2d.	If the department head's response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step three within 5 weekdays.
Step Three	Step Number	Description
Within 5 weekdays	3a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the second-level administrator (usually dean).
	3b.	Dean meets with grievant; dean may request department head to be present.
	3c.	Dean responds in writing on grievance form.
	3d.	If the dean's written response is satisfactory to grievant, that ends the matter.

	3e.	If the dean's written response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step four within 5 weekdays.
<b>Step Four</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	4a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the provost.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	4b.	Provost acknowledges receipt of grievance and forwards copy to Faculty Senate president to receive recommendation of an impartial hearing panel of the Faculty Senate Review Committee.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	4c.	Faculty Senate president acknowledges in writing to grievant that copy of grievance has been received from provost.
<b>Within 15 weekdays</b>	4d.	Faculty Senate Review Committee chair appoints hearing panel from among Faculty Senate Review Committee members; panel holds its initial meeting with both principals.
<b>Within 45 weekdays</b>	4e.	The hearing panel concludes its work and make recommendations to provost and grievant.
<b>Within 10 weekdays</b>	4f.	The provost meets with grievant.
<b>Within 10 weekdays</b>	4g.	The provost notifies grievant in writing of the decision.
	4h.	If the provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendation of the hearing panel, that ends the matter.
	4i.	If the provost's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendation of the hearing panel, move to step five within 20 calendar days.
<b>Step Five</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
	5a.	The grievant appeals in writing to president.

<b>Within 20 calendar days</b>	5b.	The president's decision is final.
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## CHAPTER SIX - RESEARCH FACULTY

### 6.0 Employment Policies for Research Faculty

Research faculty are general, teaching and research (T&R) faculty. Research faculty are designated to promote and expedite university research activities. Research faculty are typically employed on sponsored grants and contracts and are on a restricted appointment to carry out research or outreach projects. The duties of research faculty may have a small or no instructional component, Research faculty are supported by the Office of Research and Innovation.

See “Restricted Appointments” in chapter two of this handbook. Appointments to the faculty may be made for which there is no presumption or consideration of renewal. Such appointments are called “restricted” and are designated with start and end dates in the terms of faculty offer (TOFO).

See “Regular Appointments” in this chapter for circumstances in which a research faculty member may be on a regular appointment.

As valuable contributors to institutional missions, research faculty members are entitled to fair treatment and compensation, access to professional development opportunities, recognition for their accomplishments, and participation in the life of the university community.

### 6.1 Research Faculty

The [Office of Sponsored Programs](#) maintains resources on research faculty including [Principal Investigator Eligibility](#).

Track	Ranks
Postdoctoral Associate	postdoctoral associate
Research Associate	research associate, senior research associate
Research Scientist	research scientist, senior research scientist
Research Professor	research assistant professor, research associate professor, research professor

#### 6.1.1 Considerations for Establishment of Research Faculty Positions

A summary matrix of qualifications, approval requirements, general expectations, salary guidelines, and typical position responsibilities can be found on the Research and Innovation [Research Faculty Ranks](#) page.

Research faculty appointments are designated to promote and expedite university research activities. Research faculty rank descriptions create several series common to current sponsored research or outreach projects.

When establishing research faculty positions in this track, particularly at the research associate level, departments must ensure that the work anticipated for the employee is sufficiently complex and sophisticated to warrant a faculty position. A variety of staff roles are appropriate for research personnel, depending on the nature of the work proposed and the credentials required. For example, laboratory and research specialist I or II is usually the appropriate staff role for personnel

overseeing laboratory, animal care, or research support, conducting routine tests, compiling data, collecting and preparing samples.

Careful preparation of the position description by the principal investigator and/or department head, chair, school director and/or supervisor is essential in determining whether the position is staff or research faculty. Staff positions must be used where appropriate; exceptions are granted only in very rare cases.

### **6.1.2 Postdoctoral Associate**

The Office of Research and Innovation administers and supports the [university's postdoctoral associate](#) positions. Appointment to this faculty rank is usually reserved for persons who have been awarded a doctoral degree no more than four years prior to the effective date of the appointment with a minimum of one year of eligibility remaining and are engaged in research for a restricted period under the direction of a faculty mentor. The position of postdoctoral associate is intended to be a limited-term traineeship lasting two to four years (not to exceed five years), during which the individual works under the supervision of one or more senior faculty mentors in preparation for a career in academe or research. Funding is usually from a grant, contract, or a postdoctoral fellowship. Postdoctoral associates are considered temporary or short-term appointments by definition and are not appropriate for regular appointments.

The maximum cumulative allowable duration of employment for a postdoctoral associate held by a single individual, even at multiple institutions, will be five years. The maximum allowable time an individual may be employed in the rank of postdoctoral associate at Virginia Tech is five years. continued appointment beyond five years would require a promotion in rank.

Typically, postdoctoral associates have very limited responsibility for project management, supervision of personnel, or design of the research project on which they are funded. Rather, the position enables the individual to continue studies in a specialty area while gaining practical experience in the field. The postdoctoral traineeship may include opportunities to write and submit grant proposals. With the approval of the department head, chair, or school director, the postdoctoral associate may serve as co-principal investigator. In certain cases (such as young career award proposals), a postdoctoral associate is permitted to submit a grant as a principal investigator. Requests for principal investigator status may be submitted to the Office of Research and Innovation.

Searches are not required to fill a postdoctoral associate position.

### **6.1.3 Research Associate Ranks**

A person appointed to a research associate rank contributes to research activities using standard and non-standard procedures appropriate to the field. Persons appointed to research associate ranks are not eligible to be principal investigators; however, exception requests for principal investigator status for senior research associates may be submitted to the Office of Research and Innovation.

#### **6.1.3.1 Research Associate**

The research associate rank is the entry, or most junior, rank for research faculty members involved in sponsored projects. However, the work may vary from that which is appropriate for a relatively new professional to broader or more significant responsibilities expected of more experienced research faculty personnel. Research associates generally conduct research under

supervision. They may provide input into the preparation of proposals or supervise staff or student personnel, but typically they have limited responsibility and authority in these areas.

A master's degree in a relevant field is the minimum qualification for appointment as a research associate. The Office of Research and Innovation must approve requests for exceptions for individuals with a bachelor's degree and significant related experience before an offer is extended.

#### **6.1.3.2 Senior Research Associate**

The rank of senior research associate requires greater qualifications than the research associate either in education, experience, or both. Senior research associates conduct research under limited supervision.

Typically, they have some significant supervisory responsibility for lower-level personnel and may contribute to the conceptualization and preparation of research proposals, reports, and resource acquisition.

A doctorate or a terminal degree in the field and some experience are required. The Office of Research and Innovation must approve an appointment or promotion to this rank for individuals with a lesser degree and substantial related experience before an offer is extended.

### **6.1.4 Research Scientist Ranks**

#### **6.1.4.1 Research Scientist**

Research scientists fulfill a senior role in the university's research program. They conduct independent research under limited supervision. By virtue of their expertise and experience, research scientists make significant contributions to the conceptualization and conduct of the research. They may be involved in the preparation of proposals, reports, and publications, presentation of research results, and development of patents. The rank of research scientist is parallel to that of research assistant or research associate professor. A doctorate or terminal degree in the field and significant experience are expected.

#### **6.1.4.2 Senior Research Scientist**

The senior research scientist is the highest rank in the research faculty series for those who are not involved in a graduate program. As experienced research faculty members, senior research scientists are often responsible for the design and execution of a project and interpretation of research results. Typically, they have significant responsibility for supervision of personnel, budget preparation and execution, and organization and management of the research project. Guidelines and information regarding Principal Investigators is located in chapter ten of this handbook and on the Office for Sponsored Programs Principal Investigator Resources page.

The rank of senior research scientist is parallel to that of research associate professor or research professor. A doctorate or terminal degree in the field and a considerable record of research are expected.

### **6.1.5 Research Professor Ranks**

The research professor ranks are designed for research faculty members whose appointments are expected to last more than one year and whose credentials are comparable to those of the tenured and tenure-track faculty of similar rank. This track is parallel to research scientist and senior research scientist, not necessarily above it. Appointment to research professor ranks is not appropriate for those with short-term or limited appointments since this would disadvantage the graduate or professional students with whom they might work. Research faculty members with

appropriate credentials and approvals whose primary appointment is in a research unit not affiliated with a degree-granting academic department or school may also be appointed to these ranks with appropriate credentials and approvals. Tenure cannot be earned in any of the research faculty ranks and service is not applicable toward the probationary period if the employee is subsequently appointed to a tenure-track position.

With approval by the degree-granting program, those appointed to any research professor rank may direct graduate theses and dissertations and serve on graduate committees consistent with program and graduate school policy.

At the discretion of the academic department or school, departmental faculty membership with or without voting privileges may be extended to an assistant, associate, or research professor. However, a person appointed to a research professor rank is not eligible to vote on matters relating to faculty appointment, retention, promotion, or tenure.

Faculty members in this series may teach occasionally in their areas of expertise in accordance with guidelines below and by providing the appropriate credentials required of instructional faculty. Information on [Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) is on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage. Faculty in the research professor series may teach one course per year or two courses in a two-year period. They may teach more if funding is appropriately charged to the instructional budget and approved by the principal investigator/supervisor, department head, chair, or school director, and dean.

Promotion to a higher rank may be granted to research professorial faculty who have sources of continued funding and demonstrate outstanding accomplishments in appropriate activities. The curriculum vitae together with annual faculty activity reports, reprints of publications, reference letters, and other similar documents comprise a dossier, which furnishes the principal basis for promotion decisions. Besides consideration of specific professional criteria, evaluation for promotion should consider the candidate's integrity, professional conduct, and ethics. To the extent that such considerations are significant factors in reaching a negative recommendation, they should be documented as part of the formal review process.

Research professor faculty members being considered for promotion have their dossiers reviewed at as many as three levels: (1) by a departmental or school committee and the head or chair; (2) by a college committee and the dean/senior management; and (3) by the office of the provost. Faculty members are not permitted to serve on department, school, or college committees that will be reviewing a family member (spouse or dependent immediate family member) or an individual with whom they have a close personal relationship such as partner or extended family member.

#### **6.1.5.1 Research Assistant Professor**

Persons appointed as research assistant professors are required to have a doctoral degree or terminal degree appropriate to the field and credentials consistent with those for appointment to the rank of assistant professor. Research assistant professors are equivalent to research scientists in terms of their credentials; however, appointment to this rank indicates actual or anticipated involvement with the academic program.

Research assistant professors are expected to contribute significantly to the design and execution of research projects. They conduct independent research in their field of specialization under

general supervision. They may have supervisory responsibility for project personnel and contribute to project management.

The approval of the department head, chair, school director and dean (or next level administrator), and the Office of Research and Innovation is required before an offer is extended for an original appointment or reappointment, including approval of the proposed rank, salary, and other conditions.

#### **6.1.5.2 Research Associate Professor**

Persons appointed to this rank are required to have a doctoral degree or terminal degree appropriate to the field and credentials consistent with those for appointment to the rank of associate professor. Research associate professors are typically responsible for design and execution of research projects and interpretation of research results. They may have significant supervisory responsibility for project personnel and contribute to project management.

Original appointments follow standard departmental or school procedures for tenured and tenure-track faculty appointments. Typically, this involves approval by the appropriate departmental/unit/school committee, followed by approval of the department/unit head or chair, school director, and dean (or next level administrator), and the office of the provost. Promotion to this rank requires evidence of continuous professional development, documentation of excellence in the disciplinary field, contribution to research or creative activity supported through grants and contracts, and at least regional recognition. The promotion review and approval process is described in this chapter “Research Faculty Promotions: Professorial Ranks”.

#### **6.1.5.3 Research Professor**

Persons appointed to this rank are required to have a doctoral degree or terminal degree appropriate to the field and credentials consistent with those for appointment to the rank of professor. Research professors are typically responsible for design and execution of research projects and interpretation of research results. They may have significant supervisory responsibility for project personnel and contribute to project management.

Original appointments follow standard departmental or school procedures for tenured and tenure-track faculty appointments. Typically, this involves approval by the appropriate departmental/unit/school committee, followed by approval of the department/unit head or chair, school director, dean (or next level administrator), and the Office of Research and Innovation. Promotion to this rank requires evidence of continuous professional development, documentation of excellence in their disciplinary field, outstanding research or creative activity supported by grants and contracts, and national and/or international recognition. The promotion review and approval process is described in this chapter “Research Faculty Promotions: Professorial Ranks”.

### **6.2 Policies Related to Research Faculty Appointments**

Consult the [Office of Research and Innovation Human Resources](#) website. Research faculty members may be assigned a functional title in addition to their official faculty rank to facilitate their work or clarify their role to internal or external constituencies. (A functional title may not be an official faculty rank other than that held by the research faculty member.) In some cases, increased responsibilities lead to a change in functional title and possibly a salary adjustment rather than a promotion in faculty rank.

Appointments to research faculty ranks, except the rank of postdoctoral associate, are indefinitely renewable. However, tenure cannot be earned in any of the research faculty ranks and service is

not applicable toward the pre-tenure probationary period if the employee is subsequently appointed to a tenure-track position.

The source of funds is not the determining factor as to whether a position carries a research faculty rank, but rather the nature and purpose of the assignment. Thus, a research faculty member may be funded by sponsored projects, facilities and administrative funds, state dollars, or other sources. Policies related to research faculty apply, regardless of the source of funding.

Research faculty may participate in activities outside of their direct source of funding, such as providing significant contributions to the conceptualization or writing of new proposals, or teaching. However, support for any time or effort spent on activities outside of their sponsored research must come from non-sponsored research funds. Special attention should be given to the development of position descriptions where funding is limited to only sponsored funding. See [Effort Reporting](#) on the Research and Innovation website.

Original appointments and reappointments, including rank, salary, and other conditions, require the approval of the department head, chair, school director and dean (or next level administrator), and the Office of Research and Innovation before an offer is extended.

### **6.2.1 Instructional Responsibilities for Research Faculty Members**

The primary responsibility of a research faculty appointment is to conduct research and contribute to the university's research mission through the acquisition of and successful implementation of sponsored grants and contracts. Federal guidelines require truthful and auditable documentation of the faculty member's efforts on a semester basis. If the faculty member's salary is paid for by sponsored grants and contracts, then there is a concomitant expectation that the faculty member's time is allocated to those projects.

While keeping the primacy of the research role in mind, there are circumstances in which the university and its instructional programs benefit from the occasional participation of research faculty members who have the appropriate credentials, expertise, and interest. The usual limitation on teaching by research faculty members is one (three-credit) course per academic year, or no more than two courses in a two- year period. The principal investigator/supervisor, department head, chair, school director and dean must approve exceptions. The academic department or school provides instructional funding for the teaching appointment and research duties are adjusted accordingly. A three-credit course equates to 0.25 FTE during an academic semester; this is the usual basis for salary charges to the instructional budget.

Research faculty members may receive additional compensation to teach a class that exceeds their normal research assignment. To qualify for additional compensation, the research faculty member may not be 100% supported from sponsored funds, must be the instructor of record, and must usually be assigned to teach for the entire semester. For courses with block teaching, the research faculty member must have a formal teaching assignment for a specified portion of the course. The academic department or school responsible for the course must fund the payment from non-sponsored funds and initiate the payment as a temporary pay action. The payment must be approved jointly by the academic and home department, school, and college, and by the Office of Research and Innovation.

Consult [Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#). It is the responsibility of the hiring department/unit or school to obtain and verify documentation of credentials of all faculty prior to employment.

Research faculty members with appropriate credentials and experience may serve on graduate student committees in accordance with policies of the graduate school and the department or school. Those with appointment to the research professor ranks may chair a committee, if approved by the degree-granting department or school. Involvement in supervision of graduate student research may be directly related to fulfillment of sponsored grants and contracts and thus may have a synergistic effect.

Contributions to the instructional program are monitored and evaluated by the academic department or school and by the supervisor.

### **6.2.2 Research Faculty Promotions: Research Associate, Research Scientist**

[Consult Research Faculty Promotion Guidelines](#). While there is logic to the progression between and among ranks, employees may change ranks as appropriate or necessary to reflect a change in role or project that aligns best with the essential responsibilities of the position. A promotion from one rank to another may be recommended by the supervisor to recognize a faculty member's increased responsibilities, credentials, and/or contributions to the program over time.

Recommendations for promotions within the non-professorial ranks (such as research associates and research scientists) may be requested at any time during the year in recognition of significant increases in responsibilities, credentials, or contributions. The promotions require approval by the department head, chair, school director, dean, and Office of Research and Innovation. A faculty member may not serve on any committee that is evaluating a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship. Following approval of the promotion request, a promotion letter signed by the department head, chair, or school director should be presented to the employee.

### **6.2.3 Research Faculty Promotions: Professorial Ranks**

Promotion recommendations into and within the research professorial faculty ranks (research assistant professor, research associate professor, and research professor) should align with the annual timeline published by the university. Faculty members being considered for promotion have their dossiers reviewed by: (1) a departmental or school committee and the head, chair, or school director; (2) a college committee and the dean/senior management level; and (3) the Office of Research and Innovation. Following approval of the promotion request, a promotion letter signed by the Senior Vice President of Research and Innovation should be presented to the employee.

### **6.3 Affiliated Research Faculty**

Occasionally, individuals outside of university employment are identified to team with university faculty to enhance research opportunities through departments and schools. To support these associations, the university has developed the affiliated research faculty program. Affiliated research appointments may be made for individuals connected to specific academic departments or schools or may be made through research institutes or centers. Affiliated research appointments may also be established to facilitate research partnerships. This program may address occasions where a university faculty member has a spouse or partner who also has academic credentials, but who has not found appropriate employment opportunities.

Appointments in departments, schools, colleges, or by the provost, are approved at the department or school level and reviewed by Human Resources. Applicants must have academic credentials equivalent to those of university faculty, including the terminal degree usually required

of faculty in the discipline. Applications for appointment to affiliated research faculty status must have the endorsement of the department head, chair, or school director of the Virginia Tech department relevant to the applicant's discipline.

Typically, an affiliated research faculty member has unpaid adjunct status in the academic department or school for that discipline. The appointment is initiated by the host department or school submitting to the office of the provost a letter of support, the applicant's curriculum vitae, and the request for unpaid faculty affiliation with a Virginia Tech academic department or school, approved by the department head, chair, or school director, and dean or director. The appointments are renewable. The rank is the research faculty designation commensurate with the credentials of the candidate.

#### **6.4 Searches for Research Faculty**

Virginia Tech is committed to announcing the availability of positions so that a diverse pool of qualified candidates is developed for faculty positions of all types. In the case of research faculty, many of whom are hired on short-term grants and contracts sometimes requiring specialized skills and abilities, there is a need to balance the demands of the sponsored grant or contract with the institution's commitment to open and aggressive recruitment practices to attract a diverse workforce.

Competitive searches are required for salaried appointments to the research faculty, except in a limited number of cases warranting an exemption. Appointments of less than one year do not require a search. A search not required to fill a postdoctoral associate position or in the case where the person to be appointed is the author of the grant or is listed as the principal investigator or co-principal investigator, or appointment of a dual career hire. Occasionally the identified candidate may have previously worked on the project in a significant role and continuation of personnel is critical to the success of the project and a search may not be required. Consult the Office of Research and Innovation for limited exceptions.

#### **6.5 Terms of Faculty Offer (TOFO) and Documentation of Credentials**

Employment is contingent upon presentation of satisfactory documentation of credentials prior to employment. In accordance with federal law, on the first day of their employment, new employees must provide documentation of U.S. citizenship or lawful authorization to work in the United States.

All new appointments and reappointments are documented in the terms of faculty offer (TOFO) prepared by the department head, chair, or school director. The terms of faculty offer includes salary, effective date, rank, and other critical information concerning the faculty appointment. The contract specifies whether the appointment is restricted (usual appointment type for research faculty) or regular. See below for conditions under which research faculty appointments may be "regular." TOFOs refer to additional terms and conditions of employment contained in the Faculty Handbook.

The terms of faculty offer for a restricted appointment clearly defines the length of the appointment. In cases where there is no expected opportunity for continuation, the document also serves as a notice of termination. The terms of faculty offer makes clear that continuation of appointment, even during the initial year, is subject to the availability of funds, the need for services, and satisfactory performance. Related letters of offer or appointment should not contain promises that the hiring unit may not be able to keep; the university looks to the department or



school to make good on defaults. Approval of the department head, chair, or school director and dean, and the Office of Research and Innovation are required before an offer is extended.

It is the responsibility of the hiring department or school to obtain and verify documentation of credentials on all faculty prior to employment.

### **6.5.1 Restricted Appointments**

Salary support for research faculty typically comes from one or more sponsored projects. While some research faculty may be employed for years on successive grants, particularly in large, ongoing research programs, many are employed only for the duration of a specific funded project—in some cases six months and in other cases perhaps several years. Sponsored funding is seldom certain and never permanent. As a result, research faculty are usually appointed as “restricted” faculty members whose employment depends on availability of funding, the need for services, and satisfactory performance.

A research faculty member’s initial appointment or reappointment may be for up to three years provided that documented funding for the salary and fringe benefits is available from a multi-year grant, multiple grants, or other appropriate source(s), and provided a search has been conducted or an approved exemption obtained. In such cases the terms of faculty offer specifies the length of the restricted appointment.

If a person on restricted appointment is to be continued, a reappointment is required. The reappointment contract again defines the conditions of the appointment. Any changes should be made explicit. If a salary increase is approved, it should be a part of their appointment contract. Prior to the current contract end date, the department or school is expected to execute a reappointment contract. Annual evaluation and merit adjustments occur on the same cycle as for all other faculty members. A performance review must be done annually, shared with the appointee, and documented in writing.

Procedures for terminating employees are addressed in this chapter, “Termination Procedures for Research Faculty.”

### **6.5.2 Regular Appointments**

As defined in Policy 3020, “[Centers and University Institutes: Financial and Administrative Policy and Procedures](#),” and Policy 13005, “[Centers and University Institutes: Establishment, Governance, and Programmatic Oversight](#)” departments or schools intending to support specific research faculty members on applicable state funds, whether or not those individuals participate in a “program” or “center” may also seek approval to appoint a research faculty member to a regular position using the same process.

The criteria and expectations for such approval are as follows:

- The unit must have a documented record of substantial past funding, usually from diversified sources, generally over more than five years. In the case of a new center with multi-year funding, documentation of the new funding supported by the history of funding for the principal researchers may be considered. Research programs supported in full or in part by state funds are eligible for consideration for regular positions.
- The unit must have documented prospects for continued funding at a level equal to or greater than its current funding.

- The unit must be able to guarantee payment of salary and fringe benefits from sponsored grants or contracts (or other appropriate sources) for a minimum of three years to advertise a research faculty position as a regular appointment.
- The unit must be able to guarantee funding of annual leave, sick leave, and salary following non- reappointment in the case of insufficient grant funds. The source of such payouts or salary support must be non-sponsored funds, such as indirect or state funds.
- The unit will advertise and conduct a national search for regular positions. Search exemptions may be approved only under certain very limited conditions, such as unique qualifications or unit restructuring. However, a search must be conducted if there is an intention of supporting an international candidate for permanent residency. In such a case, the hiring unit should work closely with the International Support Services Office to ensure compliance with current Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) regulations.

Appropriate documentation of the search process and selection is a critical element in supporting an application for permanent residency.

In supporting the request for a regular faculty appointment, the approving department/unit or school is thereby committing itself to covering shortfalls in funding between grants, or whenever there is insufficient funding for the salary, from other sources. Should this occur, duties may be reassigned to match the available source of funds.

The Office of Research and Innovation may grant approval to the unit to conduct searches for regular positions for a period of three to five years at which time the financial capabilities and commitments of the unit are reviewed, and authorization is granted for another three-to five-year period, if appropriate.

Approval for the unit to advertise and fill some research faculty positions as regular appointments does not in any way suggest that all positions in the unit should be so designated. Indeed, careful thought should go into the shaping of such positions, the identification of talents and skills needed in the research group, and the availability of qualified individuals that may necessitate this more generous commitment of resources.

Postdoctoral associates are considered temporary or short-term appointments by definition and are not appropriate for regular appointments.

Research faculty members on regular appointments are entitled to notice of non-reappointment, as specified in chapter two of this handbook.

### **6.5.3 Calendar Year (CY) versus Academic Year (AY) Appointments**

The nature of the research enterprise generally dictates that research faculty are appointed to a calendar year (12-month) position. However, there may be circumstances in which an academic year (nine-month) appointment is justified and appropriate. The justification for an academic year appointment should accompany the faculty search authorization or search exemption request.

Academic year research appointments do not earn or accrue annual leave. Faculty members on academic year restricted appointments earn and accrue sick leave at the rate of five hours per pay period during the academic year; those on regular appointments are entitled to 1040 hours of paid sick leave upon employment. Information on faculty sick leave is on the [Human Resources Faculty Leave](#) webpage.

Research faculty members on academic year appointments may accept summer research wage (P14) or summer or winter session teaching employment in the same department, school, or program, or elsewhere in the university. Research faculty on H1-B visas qualify for summer wage employment only in very limited cases. Contact [Global Strategic Services](#) to verify eligibility. Those who have documentation of additional months of funding from sponsored grants or contracts may be eligible for consideration of a calendar year research conversion under the terms of Policy 6200, "[Policy on Research Extended Appointments](#)." See chapter two of this handbook "Research Extended Appointments for Faculty on Academic Year Appointments," and "Effort Certification Compliance Issues for Research Faculty" in this chapter, and "Effort Certification and Salary Charges to Sponsored Grants and Contracts" in chapter 10 of this handbook.

## **6.6 Position Descriptions**

Every research faculty member must have an up-to-date position description that forms the basis for initial hiring and assignment of duties and, through subsequent updates, for annual evaluation. Position descriptions should include a detailed list or narrative description of assigned responsibilities and expectations for performance. A position description should be created and entered into the university's online position description system.

## **6.7 Annual Evaluations**

Supervisors, usually principal investigators, are responsible for conducting an annual evaluation for any and all research faculty. The annual performance review must be shared with the appointee and documented in writing. This documentation supports the request for annual merit and/or special adjustments. Giving regular and constructive feedback is essential to the development of employees, and it is the responsibility of the department head, chair, or school director to be certain that research faculty are appropriately and consistently evaluated. The cycle for evaluation is the same as that for all other faculty members in their college or institute. Annual evaluation and merit adjustments occur on the same cycle as for all other faculty members.

## **6.8 Merit and Special Adjustments**

Research faculty members, both regular and restricted, are eligible for annual merit adjustments (and special adjustments when necessary and appropriate) on the same cycle as all other faculty members when available and authorized by the university. The result is then communicated to the research faculty member. A promotion requires a new Terms of Faculty Offer (TOFO). Following the annual evaluation, supervisors make recommendations to the department head, chair, or school director who, in turn, makes their recommendations to college and university officials. Final approval of the recommendations for merit and special adjustments rests with the Board of Visitors. The result is then communicated to the research faculty member. Merit recommendations for research faculty members are generally expected to track the merit adjustments for teaching and research faculty members. In some cases, available funds may limit, delay, or even preclude a merit adjustment. However, performance evaluation and feedback to the employee are still required even if a merit adjustment is not possible.

Special adjustments, outside of the annual merit process, may be recommended in accordance with the guidelines for faculty salary adjustments available from the Office of Research and Innovation. Examples of such adjustments might be for promotion in rank, increased responsibility, retention, equity, or other reasons critical to the support of research faculty members. Justification and appropriate approvals are required as outlined in the guidelines.

## **6.9 Reappointment**

Research faculty members on restricted appointment whose employment is to be continued are issued a reappointment specifying the new ending date for their appointment. Reappointments typically occur on the anniversary of the hire date or in relation to the funding cycle of the grant or appointment.

Reappointments may be for less than one year in situations where additional funding is anticipated but not confirmed. Multiple reappointments may occur during the span of the research faculty member's employment. The reappointment date may be adjusted based on other significant actions (e.g., promotion), or by issuing appointments that move the employee to the same effective date as their merit adjustment. Multi-year reappointments are possible in cases where funding is available for the proposed reappointment period.

Research faculty members on regular appointment do not have fixed ending dates to their contracts. Should it become necessary to end the appointment, they receive written notice of non-reappointment as described in chapter two of this handbook.

## **6.10 Termination Procedures for Research Faculty**

Members of the research faculty may be removed from their position by one of the following three procedures: (1) removal for just cause, (2) non-reappointment, or (3) termination of position because of insufficient funds or no further need for services. The period of notice for non-reappointment of research faculty members on regular appointments is addressed in chapter two of this handbook.

### **6.10.1 Dismissal for Cause**

Research faculty members may be dismissed for just cause. Stated causes for dismissal shall include but are not limited to professional incompetence; unacceptable or unsatisfactory performance after due notice; unethical conduct or misconduct that interferes with the capacity of the employee to effectively perform the requirements of the position; violation of university policy; falsification of credentials, experience, leave reports, or other official employment documents. Filing a grievance does not constitute just cause for termination.

When it becomes necessary to terminate a member of the research faculty for unsatisfactory performance prior to the end of the appointment period, the following procedures apply:

When the faculty supervisor determines that performance is unsatisfactory, the supervisor writes a letter to the individual detailing the areas of performance that are deficient. This letter should indicate specific expectations of improvement by the employee during a specified period of not less than 30 calendar days. The department head, chair, or school director and college dean receive copies. In cases where there is some likelihood of threat to health or safety, the 30-day period may be waived.

At the end of the above period, the faculty supervisor must again write the research faculty member with a performance evaluation during the interim since the first letter, with copies to the department head, chair, or school director and college dean or equivalent senior-level manager. If performance continues to be unsatisfactory, this second letter may contain a termination notice. The termination notice has an effective date 45 calendar days from the date of the second letter. In cases where there is a threat to health or safety, the 45-day period may be waived.

In the event of termination, the research faculty member may appeal to the department head, chair, or school director. Should the appeal process be initiated, the termination is held in abeyance until the appeal process is complete.

The appeal must be made in writing within five working days of receipt of the letter. (If the department head, chair, or school director has a conflict of interest, the head refers the matter to the college dean.)

The department head, chair, or school director (or dean) must respond in writing within 10 working days. If the recommendations of the department head, chair, or school director (or dean) are unsatisfactory to either party, an appeal may be made to the office of the provost in writing within five working days.

The Office of Research and Innovation appoints a committee of three members of the general faculty who make recommendations to the provost within 10 working days.

The decision of the provost is final and is rendered within 10 working days of receiving the report.

The above time limits of the appeal process may be altered by extenuating circumstances and the agreement of both parties.

If the research faculty member is a member of an interdisciplinary research center, the center director as well as the department head, chair, or school director and college dean of the faculty supervisor are copied on all correspondence.

### **6.10.2 Non-Reappointment of Research Faculty**

The terms of faculty offer for a restricted appointment clearly defines the length of the appointment and serves as a notice of termination. The terms of faculty offer makes clear that continuation of appointment, even during the initial year, is subject to the availability of funds, the need for services, and satisfactory performance.

Research faculty members with regular appointment receive written notice of non-reappointment as described in chapter two of this handbook should it become necessary to end the appointment.

### **6.10.3 Termination of Position Because of Insufficient Funds or No Further Need for Services**

Occasionally a sponsor terminates funding before the end of a contract or directs a change in the research program resulting in the need to terminate the services of an employee. While principal investigators and research centers are encouraged to make every effort to assure continuity of employment to individuals performing satisfactorily, there are circumstances in which this may not be possible or in the best interest of the research program or university. Research faculty appointments may be terminated in the case where there are insufficient funds or no further need for services. The date of termination for a restricted faculty member is at least 30 calendar days from the date of notification. A faculty member on a regular appointment is entitled to notice of non-reappointment, as stated in chapter two of this handbook. A proposed notice of termination because of insufficient funds or lack of need for services requires the approval of the department head, chair, or school director, and dean (or appropriate administrator), and the Office of Research and Innovation.

## **6.11 Effort Certification Compliance Issues for Research Faculty**

As described in chapter ten of this handbook, “Effort Certification and Salary Charges to Sponsored Grants and Contracts,” a research faculty member with regular, well-defined responsibilities for new proposal preparation, teaching, or administrative duties is prohibited from charging 100% of salary to sponsored projects during an effort reporting period in which such activity occurred, unless those activities are specifically allowed on the sponsored project.

Research faculty members are typically on 12-month appointments, which earn and accrue annual leave by university policy. The use of annual leave is recognized as an acceptable charge to a sponsored project when such leave is part of the university appointment.

## **6.12 Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures**

The following procedure is provided as the means for resolution of grievances against a supervisor or member(s) of the university administration brought by members of the research faculty.

### **6.12.1 Ombuds, Mediation Services, and Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation**

**Informal Dialogue:** It should be possible to resolve most faculty concerns or complaints through informal communication among colleagues working together in the academic enterprise. Accordingly, a faculty member who feels there is a grievance is encouraged to take it to the immediate supervisor in the collegial spirit of problem solving rather than as a confrontation between adversaries.

**University Ombuds.** Any member of the university community may visit the [Virginia Tech Office of Interactive Communication and Empowerment \(VOICES\)](#). The university Ombuds listens and explores options for addressing and resolving concerns or complaints. The Ombuds Office does not have the authority to make decisions or to reverse any decision made or actions taken by university authorities. The Ombuds Office supplements, but does not replace, the university's existing resources for conflict resolution and its systems of review and adjudication.

Communications with the Ombuds Office are considered confidential. The Ombuds Office will not accept legal notice on behalf of the university, and information provided to the Ombuds Office will not constitute such notice to the university. Should someone wish to make the university formally aware of a particular problem, the Ombuds Office can provide information on how to do so. The only exception to this pledge of confidentiality is where the Ombuds Office determines that there is an imminent risk of serious harm, or if disclosure is required by law.

To preserve independence and neutrality, the Ombuds Office reports directly to the University President. The Ombuds Office does not keep permanent records of confidential communications.

**Reconciliation.** At the initiation of the grievance procedure, or at any earlier time, the grievant may request the assistance of the [Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation](#) in fashioning an equitable solution. Contacting the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not required in filing a grievance, but it may be useful if the grievant feels that the issue may be amenable to, but will require time for, negotiation; or if the grievant is unsure whether the concern is a legitimate issue for a grievance; or if personal relations between the parties involved in the grievance have become strained. Contact [Faculty Affairs in the provost's office for information on Reconciliation.](#)

For a potential grievance issue to qualify for consideration by the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, the grievant contacts the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation within 30 calendar days of the time when the grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is the basis for the potential grievance, just as if beginning the regular grievance process. If the grievant requests assistance from the Faculty Senate Committee on

Reconciliation, that committee requests a postponement of the time limits involved in the grievance procedure while it deals with the case. The chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation submits the request in writing to the vice provost for faculty affairs. Also, the grievant reaches an understanding with the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation of the time frame planned for that committee's work on the case, such time not to exceed 60 calendar days.

Faculty members may also consult the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation about serious disagreements with immediate supervisors or other university administrators concerning issues that may not be eligible for consideration within the grievance process. In such instances, the committee contacts the relevant administrator to determine if there is an interest and willingness to explore informal resolution of the dispute; it is not necessary to notify the office of the provost. Information on the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is in chapter two of this handbook and on the Faculty Senate website.

**Mediation.** Mediation is available through the [Office for Equity and Accessibility](#) and is a voluntary, confidential process through which trained neutral third persons (mediators) assist people to express their concerns and develop solutions to the dispute in a safe and structured environment. Assistance with mediation is available through Human Resources. Because mediation is voluntary, both parties must agree to participate. Faculty members and supervisors are encouraged to consider using mediation to resolve disputes or to help address a conflict between a faculty member and another member of the Virginia Tech community.

**Role of Mediators.** Mediators do not make judgments, determine facts, or decide the outcome; instead, they facilitate discussion between the participants, who identify the solutions best suited to their situation. No agreement is made unless and until it is acceptable to the participants.

**Requesting Mediation:** Mediation is available at any time, without the filing of a grievance. Additionally, mediation may be requested by any party during the grievance process prior to step four. If, after the initiation of a formal grievance, both parties agree to participate in mediation, the grievance is placed on administrative hold until the mediation process is complete. If the parties come to a resolution of the dispute through mediation, the parties are responsible to each other for ensuring that the provisions of the agreement are followed. If the parties are not able to reach a mutual resolution to the dispute through mediation, the grievant may request that the grievance be reactivated, and the process continues.

Mediation differs from faculty reconciliation in that mediators do not engage in fact-finding or in evaluation of decisions. Both mediation and reconciliation, however, are voluntary; no party is required to participate in either process.

### **6.12.2 The Formal Grievance Procedure**

If the assistance of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not desired or is not requested; or if that committee determines that it cannot provide assistance in the matter; or if the grievant finds that the length of time the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation plans or

takes with the case is excessive; or if the grievant is not satisfied with the recommendations of that committee, the grievant may pursue the issue as a formal grievance through the following procedure. A [grievance form](#) is available on the provost's webpage. The department head, chair, or school director, dean, and other administrative faculty will cooperate with the grievant in the mechanics of processing the grievance, but the grievant alone is responsible for preparation of the case.

**Step one:** The grievant shall provide a written description of the event or action on the faculty grievance form and relevant supporting documentation of the grievance within 30 calendar days of the date when the event or action should have been known that is the basis of the grievance to the immediate supervisor. [Research faculty grievance forms](#) are available on provost's Faculty Forms page.

The supervisor meets with the grievant and provides a written response within five weekdays to the grievant citing reasons for action taken or not taken and the final decision. If the supervisor's response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

If the response is not satisfactory to the grievant or the supervisor does not respond within five weekdays, the grievant will indicate "no resolution" on the faculty grievance form, return a copy of the form to the immediate supervisor and proceed to step two.

**Step two:** The grievant advances the written description of the event or action, relevant supporting documentation, research faculty grievance form and the written response of the immediate supervisor (or statement of non-response if the supervisor did not respond within five the weekdays at step one) to the next level administrator within five weekdays of receipt of the decision. The next level administrator is the department head, chair, or school director. If the department head, chair, or school director has a conflict of interest, he or she refers the matter is referred to the college dean. The administrator involved at this level is hereafter referred to as the second-level administrator.

Within five weekdays of receipt of the research faculty grievance form, the second-level administrator meets with the grievant and may request the presence of the immediate supervisor. The grievant may similarly request that a chosen representative from among the university faculty be present. Unless the grievant is represented by a member of the faculty who is also a lawyer, the second-level administrator does not have legal counsel present.

The second-level administrator returns the research faculty grievance form and provides a written response and final decision to the grievant with copies to the immediate supervisor within five weekdays after the meeting. The decision of the second-level administrator takes precedence over the decision of the immediate supervisor. If the response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter. If the response is not satisfactory or if there is no response within five weekdays by the second level administrator, the grievant may indicate on the grievance form and return a copy to the second-level administrator and proceed to step three.

**Step three:** The grievant may advance the written description of the event or action, relevant supporting documentation grievance form and written responses of the immediate supervisor and second-level administrator to the dean or equivalent senior-level manager within five weekdays of receipt of the decision in step two.



The dean will inform the immediate supervisor within five weekdays that the procedure has advanced to step three.

Within five weekdays of receipt of the grievance form, the dean meets with the grievant and may request the presence of the immediate supervisor. The grievant may similarly request that a chosen representative from among the university faculty be present. Unless the grievant is represented by a member of the faculty who is also a lawyer, the dean does not have legal counsel present.

The dean shall return the grievance form and provide a written response and final decision to the grievant with copies to the immediate supervisor and second-level administrator within five weekdays after the meeting. The decision of the dean takes precedence over the decision of the second-level administrator. If the response is satisfactory to the grievant, the procedure is terminated. If the response is not satisfactory or if there is no response within five weekdays by the dean, the grievant may so indicate on the research faculty grievance form and return a copy to the dean and proceed to step four.

**Step four:** The grievant will advance the written description of the event or action, relevant supporting documentation, research faculty grievance form, and written responses of the immediate supervisor, second-level administrator, and dean to the provost within five weekdays of the decision of step four. The provost will make a decision and may wish to consult faculty members unfamiliar with the grievance for an opinion.

The decision of the provost is final and will be rendered to the grievant and immediate supervisor within five weekdays of receipt of the grievance.

The above time limits of the appeal process may be altered by extenuating circumstances and the agreement of both parties.

If the research faculty member is a member of an interdisciplinary research center, the center director as well as the department head, chair, or school director and dean are copied on all correspondence.

### **6.12.3 Timeliness of Grievance and Procedural Compliance**

A grievance must be brought forward in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of the grievant to initiate the grievance process within 30 calendar days of the time when the event or action should have been known that is the basis for the grievance. The university administration is not required to accept a grievance for processing if the grievant does not meet the 30-day deadline, except in cases of demonstrated good cause.

Scheduled commitments made prior to the time of filing or advancement of a grievance that preclude action by either of the parties to the grievance automatically extend time limits for their duration unless this would be demonstrably harmful to the fair processing of the grievance. In such cases, on written request by the grievant to the appropriate office for that step, the grievance is advanced to the next step in the grievance process.

If the grievant does not follow the time limits specified in the grievance procedure it is assumed that the last proposed resolution as satisfactory was accepted. If the grievant desires to advance the grievance after the appropriate specified time limits have lapsed, the administrator who receives the late submission notifies the chair of the [Faculty Senate Review Committee](#) in writing, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee determines if there was good cause for

the delay. If so, the grievance proceeds. If not, the process ends with the most recently proposed resolution in force. The finding on the matter by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee is communicated to both parties in writing.

If either party to a grievance charges the other with procedural violations other than time limit issues, a special committee of two research faculty appointed by the Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee is convened to rule on the question, as in disputes about the validity of issues qualifying for the grievance procedure. The special committee has the following options. It can either find no significant procedural violation occurred, in which case the grievance process continues unaffected, or that a significant procedural violation did occur. If the administrator committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance automatically qualifies for advancement to the next step in the grievance process. If the grievant committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance process ends at that point with the last proposed resolution established as the final disposition of the case.

The Faculty Senate Review Committee does not normally consider the subject of a grievance while it is simultaneously under review by another committee or panel of the university.

Information on the Faculty Senate Review Committee is in chapter two of this handbook and on the [Faculty Senate website](#).

#### **6.12.4 Valid Issues for Grievance**

For this process, a grievance is defined as a complaint by a faculty member alleging a violation, misinterpretation, or incorrect application of a policy, procedure, or practice of the university that directly affects the grievant. Some examples of valid issues for filing a grievance are: improperly or unfairly determined personnel decisions that result in an unsatisfactory annual performance evaluation, unreasonable merit adjustment or salary level, or excessive teaching load/work assignments; substantive violations of promotion procedures; reprisals; substantive error in the application of policy; and matters relating to academic freedom.

**Issues not open to grievance.** While most faculty disputes with the university administration may be dealt with by this grievance policy, the following issues may not be made the subject of a grievance: determination of policy appropriately promulgated by the university administration or the university governance system; those items falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures (for example, complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment, appeals of non-reappointment, and/or promotion decisions); the contents of personnel and other policies, procedures, rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes; the routine assignment of university resources (e.g., space, operating funds, parking, etc.); usual actions taken, or recommendations made, by administrators or committee members acting in an official capacity in the grievance process; termination of appointment by removal for just cause, non-reappointment, or abolition of position; or allegations of misconduct in scholarly activities.

**Adjudication of disputes on the validity of issues qualifying for consideration under the faculty grievance procedures.** If a university administrator rules that an issue does not qualify for the grievance process, the grievant may write to the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee within five weekdays of receiving such notification and request a ruling from a special committee consisting of the president of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee. The special committee considers the matter (including consultations with both parties if deemed necessary) and rules by majority vote on the admissibility of the matter to the grievance process. This special

committee is called together by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee, who also sends a written report of the results of the deliberations of the committee to all parties concerned.

### **6.12.5 Particular Concerns and Definitions**

Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion are the makers of such an agreement. An [agreement form to extend the grievance response time](#) is available on the provost's Faculty Forms webpage.

Grievances that advance to step four during or close to the summer and/or teaching breaks during the academic year may require some extension of the stipulated time limits. The principals and the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee negotiate such an extension. Every effort is made, however, to stay within the stipulated time limits.

If a faculty member is away from the assigned work location at the time the event or action that is the basis for a grievance is discovered, the 30-day period during which the grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor to initiate the grievance process begins when the faculty member returns to the assigned work location. If the date of return causes a delay of such length that the grievance, or its resolution, is not timely, the grievant may submit the grievance in writing to the immediate supervisor (step two), omitting personal meetings until such time as the faculty member returns to the assigned work location.

“Weekdays,” as used in this procedure, include Monday through Friday only and only when those days are not national, state, or religious holidays relevant to the principals in the grievance.

To protect a grievant from undue pressure in the pursuit of a grievance, if a grievant becomes ill and takes sick leave the grievance process stops until such time as the grievant can resume duties. Exceptions to this provision are made at the request of the grievant, but only if the grievant obtains and produces medical certification that proceeding with the grievance will not be harmful to the health of the grievant or exacerbate the ailment that required taking sick leave.

All costs of legal counsel employed by a grievant are borne by the grievant.

If a grievant is employed away from Blacksburg and is required to travel away from their duty station in resolution of their grievance, the university pays all travel costs permitted under state regulations.

If a faculty member discovers there is a grievance about actions by an administrator above the level of the immediate supervisor that directly involve the faculty member, or with actions by an administrator not in the department or school that directly involve the faculty member, the grievant initiates the grievance process by seeking the mediation of the immediate supervisor within 30 calendar days of the discovery of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. If that effort does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, the grievant, after consulting the immediate supervisor, may file the faculty grievance form at the appropriate level or with the appropriate administrative office to initiate response from the administrator perceived as the source of the action causing the grievance. The grievance process then proceeds from that level onward in usual fashion.

A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the provost is managed by the chair of the Faculty Senate Review Committee and a regular impartial hearing panel, but the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel are sent to the university president for ruling, rather

than to the provost. A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the president of the university is dealt with by a special panel appointed by the provost in consultation with the president of the Faculty Senate.

Any final resolution of a grievance must be consonant with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and university policy.

Once a grievance is resolved, either to the satisfaction of the grievant, or if not to the satisfaction of the grievant, by the action of the provost in consonance with the hearing panel recommendations or by the ruling of the president, that specific grievance is closed and may not be made the subject of another grievance.

### 6.12.6 Overview of the Formal Grievance Process for Research Faculty

Below is an abbreviated overview of the grievance process and deadlines. Refer to “The Formal Grievance Procedure” in this chapter for specific details and options available in each step of the grievance process.

Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion are the makers of such an agreement. ([An agreement form to extend the grievance response time](#) is available on the provost’s Faculty Forms page.)

Step One	Step Number	Description
Within 30 days of event	1a.	Grievant submits written grievance to supervisor.
	1b.	The supervisor meets with the grievant and provides written response.
	1c.	If the supervisor’s response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.
	1d.	If supervisor’s response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step two within 5 weekdays.
Step Two	Step Number	Description
Within 5 weekdays	2a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the next-level administrator referred to as the second-level administrator.
	2b.	Second-level administrator provides written response.
	2c.	If the second-level administrator’s written response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

	2d.	If the second-level administrator's written response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step four within 5 weekdays.
<b>Step Three</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	3a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the dean or equivalent senior-level manager.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	3b.	The dean or equivalent senior-level manager meets with grievant; dean or senior-level manager may request immediate supervisor to be present.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	3c.	The dean or senior-level manager provides a written response.
	3d.	If the dean's or senior-level manager's written response is satisfactory to grievant, that ends the matter.
	3e.	If the dean's or senior-level manager's written response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step five within 5 weekdays.
<b>Step Four</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	4a.	The grievant advances grievance form to the provost.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	4b.	The provost may consult faculty members unfamiliar with the grievance for their opinion and provides a response in writing. The provost's decision is final.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL FACULTY INCLUDING VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION FACULTY**

### **7.0 Employment Policies for Administrative and Professional Faculty**

#### **7.1 Categories and Definition of Administrative and Professional Faculty**

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors adopted modified titles, definitions, and qualification criteria for administrative and professional (A/P) faculty. The titles, definitions, and criteria recognize the education, professional training and experience required of a wide variety of positions at the university: “administrative” faculty who serve in senior executive roles and “professional” faculty members who serve as administrators and professionals.

##### **7.1.1 Administrative Faculty – Executive and Senior Administrators**

Administrative faculty members are referred to as executive or senior administrators to accurately reflect the nature of these appointments. See Central Administration in chapter one of this handbook.

Executive or senior administrators perform work related to the management of the educational and general activities of the institution at least 50% or more of their contractual time. Senior administrators typically serve in executive level leadership roles such as vice president, vice provost, dean, and assistant or associate vice president or dean. The organizational reporting relationship is usually not lower than three levels below the president or the next most senior position to the president.

Administrative faculty may have a rank other than lecturer, may hold an academic rank in a college department or school, and may be tenured.

**Qualifications.** Executive and senior administrators must have an advanced degree or training and work experience at a level that equates to an advanced degree; a master’s degree is the typical minimum entry qualification. Many of these positions, particularly executive and senior administrators in academic leadership roles, may require a terminal degree. Executive and senior administrators regularly exercise discretionary actions.

##### **7.1.2 Professional Faculty**

Professional faculty are administrators with responsibilities in a variety of roles and appointments. The professional A/P faculty include positions with significant managerial, supervisory, and budgetary oversight within a unit, and positions that provide direct services. Professional faculty may direct or provide support for academic, administrative, Extension, outreach, athletic, or other programs. They work in information technology, budget or finance, human resources, public relations, development, and architectural or engineering functions. Promotion is recognized by salary adjustment and/or a change in functional title rather than promotion in faculty rank.

Professional A/P faculty typically have responsibility for supervision and evaluation of a significant number of university staff and/or other professional faculty, and budgetary responsibility for their unit or a substantive program. Incumbents exercise discretion and independent judgment and perform managerial or directorial functions for at least 50% of their contractual appointment. Managers and directors typically report to a senior administrator and provide leadership and oversight for their unit or a significant program.

Professional A/P faculty include employees who provide direct service to students, other university constituencies, or clients external to the university as part of the university's missions of learning, discovery, and engagement. They may direct or provide support for academic, administrative, Extension, outreach, athletic, or other programs. Professional faculty may also provide or support vital university roles such as information technology, budget or finance, human resources, public relations, development, and architectural or engineering functions.

Professional A/P faculty regularly exercise discretion and judgment and take initiative in conducting their primary roles and assignments. Professionals include, but are not limited to, Extension faculty, librarians (not on continued appointment-track appointment), coaches, physicians, lawyers, engineers, architects, student or academic affairs professionals, development officers, public relations, human resources, or information technology, and financial specialists.

**Qualifications:** Professionals must have an advanced degree. A master's degree is the typical entry qualification; however, exceptions can be made to include individuals with a bachelor's degree and significant professional training or certifications critical to their fields. In some cases, individuals with substantial professional level experience or expertise that equates to the minimum educational qualifications may be considered for appointment. Professionals must regularly exercise discretionary actions.

The work must be intellectual and varied in character, in contrast to positions that carry out more standardized or routine tasks and activities.

## **7.2 Administrative and Professional Faculty Rank and Title**

**Lecturer.** The rank of lecturer is generally reserved for A/P faculty appointments. A master's degree or bachelor's degree with significant professional experience is the minimum expectation for appointment to the administrative and professional faculty. Tenure cannot be awarded at this rank. Promotion for administrative and professional faculty is usually recognized by changes in functional title rather than promotion in faculty rank. Appointments are considered term and are renewable annually.

**Position Description and Performance.** The supervisor is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date position description for each administrative and professional faculty member in the unit and for determining acceptable standards of performance. Goals and objectives are developed annually in consultation with the faculty member. These should relate closely to the functional title and position description and should become criteria for judging professional performance at the end of the performance cycle.

**Administrative faculty.** Administrative faculty usually have a rank other than lecturer, may hold an academic rank in a college department or school, and may be tenured.

**Professional faculty.** Professional faculty have the nominal faculty rank of lecturer and a functional title appropriate to the position (e.g., lecturer and director, or assistant dean of students). Professional advancement is recognized by salary adjustment and/or functional title advancement not in faculty rank.

Administrative and professional faculty to whom initial ranks other than lecturer were assigned prior to July 1, 1983, retain such ranks.

**Faculty Rank in an Academic Department or School.** Executive and senior administrators who achieve tenure in an academic department or school retain their tenure. Members of the administrative and professional faculty with appropriate credentials and responsibilities in an academic department or school may be assigned a faculty rank.

Initial assignment of a standard faculty rank (assistant, associate, or professor) for non-tenure-track administrative and professional faculty is recommended using standard personnel appointment/review procedures and the approval of a departmental/school promotion and tenure committee or personnel committee. A faculty member may not serve on any committee that is evaluating a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship. Departmental/school recommendations for rank are forwarded to the dean and subsequently to the provost for administrative approval.

Administrative and professional faculty who hold a standard faculty rank with an academic department or school are considered for promotion in rank by submitting their credentials through the usual department/school promotion process including consideration by the department/school, college, and university committees. The department head, chair, or school director works closely with the committee to develop reasonable guidelines for consideration of rank promotions for A/P faculty affiliated with the department or school and with the individual A/P faculty member so that the appropriate materials are submitted for committee consideration. Appeal of a negative promotion decision is managed in accordance with appeal procedures outlined in chapter three of this handbook “Appeals of Decisions on Non-Reappointment, Tenure, or Promotion.” The assignment of, or change in, a standard faculty rank carries no aspect of tenure.

### **7.2.1 University Libraries Faculty**

University Libraries faculty are A/P faculty. Policies for libraries faculty with continued appointment and continued appointment-track are described in chapter four of this handbook. Consult the University Libraries webpage for [information on promotion and continued appointment](#).

### **7.2.2 Virginia Cooperation Extension faculty (Extension Faculty)**

The policies in this chapter apply to Extension faculty. However, Extension faculty who are on the tenure-track or are tenured are not A/P faculty members and are covered in chapter three of this handbook. Information on Extension faculty positions is on “[Careers in Extension](#)” on the Virginia Cooperative Extension website.

#### **Extension Agent**

Ranks: associate extension agent, extension agent, senior extension agent

#### **Extension Specialist**

Ranks: associate extension specialist, extension specialist, senior extension specialist

#### **4-H Center Program Director**

Ranks: associate program director, program director, senior program director

Extension faculty may or may not hold an appointment in an academic college. They are, nonetheless, subject to high professional standards in the dissemination of knowledge through the Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and in the planning and delivery of educational programs and programs of assistance to industries and local governmental agencies. In these functions, Extension faculty share many of the professional concerns of their college colleagues, including the need for the protection of academic freedom in these responsibilities.



The rank held by a faculty member in Extension does not imply a particular rank in any college department or school. Extension faculty may hold concurrent adjunct status in a college department or school to formally recognize their contributions to the undergraduate or graduate program.

Tenure awarded to any member of the Virginia Cooperative Extension faculty before July 1, 1983, continues to be recognized. Continued appointment awarded to any member of the Virginia Cooperative Extension faculty before August 10, 2024, continues to be recognized.

## **7.3 Policies Related to Administrative and Professional Faculty Appointments**

### **7.3.1 Protection of Academic Freedom**

The university recognizes the need to protect the academic freedom of administrative and professional faculty members when their responsibilities include instruction, direct support of the academic programs of the university, or an activity in which academic freedom is respected.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Faculty are subject to high professional standards in the dissemination of knowledge through the Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and in the planning and delivery of educational programs and programs of assistance to industries and local governmental agencies. In these functions, Extension faculty members share many of the professional concerns of their collegiate colleagues, including the need for the protection of academic freedom in these responsibilities.

### **7.3.2 Initial Appointment and Appointment Term**

**Search.** Faculty search resources are available on the [Human Resources Faculty Recruiting Guidelines page](#). Further guidance for searches involving senior administrative faculty positions (e.g., dean, vice president, or president) is included in other sections of this handbook.

**Restricted.** Some administrative and professional faculty may be appointed on a “restricted” rather than “regular” appointment. The special conditions of temporary, restricted appointments are described in chapter two of this handbook “Restricted Appointments.”

**Appointment term.** Initial appointments to an administrative or professional faculty position are usually for a minimum of one calendar year (CY) or academic year (AY), as appropriate. If the annual evaluation is positive, the faculty member can typically expect to continue employment. Important determinants in any reappointment decision is a productive and effective job performance and the continued need of the university for the scope and level of services being provided.

To address budget reductions, and with a six-month written notice to the employee, the university is authorized to convert administrative and professional faculty on calendar year appointments to the traditional academic year appointment period, or to an alternate 9, 10, or 11-month appointment.

**Appointment with tenure in an academic department or school.** On occasion, requests are made by outside candidates, particularly for executive or senior administrative appointments or administrative appointments in academic areas, for an appointment with tenure and rank in an academic department or school comparable to that held at the previous institution. Appointment with tenure requires review and approval by a subcommittee of the university promotion and tenure committee (see section 3.3 Procedures for Faculty Appointments with Tenure).

Review and approval by the department head, chair, or school director and the departmental or school promotion and tenure committee (or the University Libraries continued appointment committee), the dean, the provost, and the president is required before a decision is made to extend a firm offer that includes the granting of tenure or continued appointment in the University Libraries to a senior academic administrator. Review and approval by the department or school promotion and tenure committee or University Libraries continued appointment committee shall be sought before a decision is made to extend a firm offer of tenure or of a rank other than lecturer to an administrative or professional faculty member.

### **7.3.3 Degree Verification and Qualifications for Teaching**

Prior to employment, Human Resources verifies the highest degree earned for salaried administrative and professional faculty members. Verification is conducted by a certified vendor. In cases where Human Resources is unable to complete the verification for any reason, the candidate is responsible for providing an original transcript to Human Resources within 30 days of notification by the university. Initial and/or continued employment is contingent upon verification of appropriate credentials.

Administrative or professional faculty who teach credit courses are responsible for providing an original transcript to the teaching department or school for verification of appropriate credentials in accordance with the university's regional accrediting body Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC). [Qualifications for teaching](#) are found on the provost's webpage.

### **7.3.4 Calendar Year (CY) and Academic Year (AY) Appointments**

Most administrative and professional faculty positions are 12-month, calendar year (CY) appointments from July 1 to June 30. Some administrative and professional faculty positions are established as 9, 10, or 11-month appointments based on programmatic need.

Regular administrative and professional (A/P) faculty members on academic year (AY) appointment earn annual leave only during the period of their appointment and at the same rate as regular A/P faculty members on calendar year (CY) appointment. That is, two days (16 hours) of annual leave credit are earned per month in accordance with leave regulations; after 20 years of continuous employment by the commonwealth, 18 hours of annual leave are earned per month.

## **7.4 Annual Evaluation and Salary Adjustments**

The Board of Visitors delegates the authority to the president or the president's designee for selected faculty appointments and compensation actions as outlined in the Amended Delegation of Authority for Selected Personnel Actions dated June 11, 2024.

The Board of Visitors annually approves a faculty compensation plan, including the authorization of an annual merit process guided by the university's Faculty Handbook and processes provided by the commonwealth. The faculty compensation plan provides information about the promotion and tenure process; the annual evaluation and salary adjustment process for teaching and research (T&R) faculty, administrative and professional (A/P) faculty, and research faculty; salary adjustments within the evaluation period, and the pay structure.

All faculty members are required to report annually on their activities. The annual Faculty Activity Report (FAR) must be completed at a time determined by the appropriate administrator, but usually near the end of the academic or fiscal year, referencing their goals and objectives and citing their successes, shortfalls, and future directions. Additional items to report are service to

the university, creative scholarship, and other professional activities and recognitions during the year.

The performance of each administrative and professional faculty member is evaluated annually in a discussion with the supervisor and by written response. The annual faculty activity report and evaluation are part of the basis for salary adjustments and other personnel matters. Timely submission of the annual faculty activity report (FAR) is required for consideration for a merit adjustment.

#### **7.4.1 Salary Adjustments**

Salary increases are based on merit and are not automatic. Recommendations for salary adjustments are approved by the appropriate supervisor, dean (where relevant), or vice president.

Salary adjustments may be recommended to address such issues as equity, increased responsibility, and retention for an especially meritorious employee, or completion of a doctorate.

Merit encompasses more than adequate performance of assigned duties. Administrative and professional faculty should collaborate with their supervisor to develop a long-range plan to demonstrate a high level of competence in the areas below.

#### **7.4.2 Electronic Faculty Activity Reporting (EFAR)**

Virginia Tech uses an electronic faculty activity data system to collect and manage information about research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, extension, outreach, and service activities. This system can automate the production of annual faculty activity reports, promotion and tenure dossiers, and CVs, as well as department, college, and university level reports. The system also enables deposit and claiming of scholarly works in the [VTechWorks](#) institutional repository and will feed public web profiles using [VT Experts](#).

A/P faculty members should consult with their department head, chair, school director, or supervisor on whether the annual faculty activity report (FAR) should be submitted using the university's electronic system. Information on [EFARs](#) is on the provost's Faculty Affairs webpage.

**Performance.** Administrative and professional faculty members have an obligation to maintain a high level of performance in their job. Evaluations are based upon standards set by the supervisor with the participation of the faculty member and relate closely to the duties inherent in the functional title and position description. Expectations set annually are important criteria for judging job performance.

**Service to the university.** Historically, Virginia Tech depends on the administrative and professional faculty for service on a wide variety of committees and as leaders and support for important university projects and initiatives. Demonstrated participation in and leadership of departmental, school, college, or university committees, special university-wide assignments, or similar activity on behalf of university priorities is expected of those who hold administrative positions.

**Professional and scholarly activities.** Administrative and professional faculty have an obligation to maintain a high level of professional competence and to stay current in developments in their field. Effective administrators benefit from active involvement in the intellectual and scholarly development of their field and contributions to their profession.

**Teaching in appropriate credit or non-credit programs.** Administrative and professional faculty may contribute to academic programs by teaching undergraduate or graduate courses or becoming involved in continuing and professional education activities.

#### **7.4.2 Annual and Periodic Reviews of Administrators Reporting to the President**

The president's office guides the Administrative Evaluation and Development Program which documents the process to be used for periodic evaluations and executive development for the vice presidents reporting directly to the president, or to the executive vice president and chief operating officer, the president's direct reports, and direct reports to the vice presidents.

The vice presidents participate in an external leadership assessment and development program appropriate to the stage of their career. The selected program must include an opportunity for 360-degree feedback, with responses shared with the president. Participation in the evaluation and development program is required within two years of the initial appointment and every five years thereafter. The president may also solicit feedback from other individuals and/or constituencies as may be appropriate to the administrator being reviewed. Preparation of an individual development plan and executive coaching for a limited period are also standard elements of the process. The president provides verbal and written feedback to the administrator.

The review process for those senior administrators who report directly to the president and direct reports to the vice presidents will follow a similar pattern, generally using internal assessment instruments and professional development resources.

The determination of participants for the Administrative Evaluation and Development Program, the schedule, and specific procedures for periodic evaluations of administrators reporting through the president are the responsibility of the president's office.

The university president determines the schedule and review process for the provost, vice presidents, senior staff reporting to the president, and other non-academic administrators. Detailed evaluation program procedures can be obtained from the President's Office.

Periodic assessments of all administrative vice presidents (executive, senior, and vice presidents) are completed every five years. Administrative vice presidents new to their role will have a periodic review within two years of assuming their new role.

The assessment will be comprised of a 360-assessment instrument, executive coach, and completion of a development plan. The president will initiate the review of vice presidents with a direct reporting line. The executive vice president and chief operating officer initiates the review of vice presidents with a direct reporting line.

Assessments for other leaders and directors of major organizational units reporting to the president, the executive vice president and chief operating officer, or administrative vice presidents are encouraged.

#### **7.4.3 Annual and Periodic Reviews of Administrators and Directors of Major Organizational Units Reporting to the Provost**

See chapter three in this handbook for periodic review of college deans, dean of university libraries, dean of the honors college, dean of graduate education, senior administrators, and academic vice presidents are subject to review every five years. Periodic reviews are administered by the office of the provost. The determination of participants, the schedule, and

specific procedures for periodic review of academic administrators are the responsibility of the provost.

#### **7.4.4 Teaching For-credit Classes and Overload Compensation for Administrative and Professional Faculty**

[Policy 4072 Teaching Credit Classes](#) allows appropriately credentialed administrative and professional (A/P) faculty to teach graduate or undergraduate courses at the university if requested to do so by an academic program. The policy provides guidelines for A/P faculty members whose normal job responsibilities do not include teaching. To be eligible for overload compensation, the A/P faculty member must have full responsibility for teaching a class. Occasional lectures, supervision of interns or practicum students, or other minor instructional support activities typically are not compensated.

Academic departments and schools may employ full-time administrative and professional faculty to teach one course per semester. The A/P faculty member must hold the minimum credentials required for teaching courses in accordance with accreditation expectations. It is the responsibility of the teaching department or school to verify and document appropriate [Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#) which are on the provost's webpage.

The A/P faculty member may receive overload payment for teaching credit courses only when such teaching is not part of the usual expectation for the administrative and professional position. Teaching for supplemental compensation is limited by overall time and income restrictions defined in the consulting policy. The [Technical Assistance Program](#) (TAP) through Continuing and Professional Education and "Outside Employment and External Activities Other Than Consulting" in chapter two of this handbook).

The teaching assignment must be approved in advance by the faculty member's own department head, chair, school director, or supervisor. The department head, chair, school director or supervisor determines whether the teaching assignment is within the A/P faculty member's usual job responsibilities, and therefore eligible (or not) for additional compensation. The agreement may be multi-year and revisited periodically if the instructional assignment is on-going.

In approving or disapproving the teaching assignment, the department head, chair, school director or supervisor considers the A/P faculty member's ability to manage additional work outside of usual job expectations, whether the course occurs during normal hours of work, and whether scheduled absences and additional responsibilities will create undue disruption. The benefit to the A/P faculty member for professional development and contribution to the academic program is also considered.

Engagement of administrative and professional faculty in the instructional mission of the university is encouraged; however, teaching on an overload basis is not a right. Continued satisfactory performance in the primary position is essential and is the basis of the annual performance evaluation and merit adjustment.

#### **7.5 Non-Reappointment or Reassignment**

Members of the administrative and professional faculty may be removed from their position by one of the following four procedures: (1) non-reappointment, (2) reassignment, (3) removal for just cause, or (4) abolition of position.

### **7.5.1 Non-Reappointment of Administrative and Professional Faculty on Regular Appointments**

Monitoring the progress of newly appointed administrative and professional faculty members is the responsibility of the supervisor. An evaluation is made prior to the end of the first year of the appointment to ascertain that the faculty member is performing the assigned duties in a highly satisfactory manner. If the evaluation is positive, the faculty member can usually expect to be reappointed for another year.

Notice of non-reappointment for administrative and professional faculty on regular appointment is given in writing in accordance with the standards of notice in chapter two of this handbook "Retirement, Resignation, and Non- Reappointment."

### **7.5.2 Non-Reappointment of Administrative and Professional Faculty on Restricted Appointments**

Restricted appointments may be terminated for several reasons including discontinuation of funding, or a change in research or other program priorities, resulting in the need to terminate the services of an employee. Administrative and professional faculty appointments may be terminated in the case where there are insufficient funds or no further need for services. The date of termination for a restricted A/P faculty member is at least 30 calendar days from the date of notification. A proposed notice of termination because of insufficient funds or lack of need for services requires the approval of the department head, chair, school director and dean (or appropriate administrator), and the provost or president (or their designees).

### **7.5.3 Reassignment**

The university may reassign administrative and professional faculty members at any time. Reassignment may involve a change in administrative title or supervisory responsibilities, reassignment to another position or department or school, transfer to a staff position, and/or reduction in salary commensurate with reduced responsibilities. Neither notice of non-reappointment nor removal for cause is required to effect a reassignment. The university's responsibility under reassignment is to make available a substitute position or duties reasonably commensurate with the person's education, experience, and performance. A reassignment that involves a geographic transfer of more than 50 miles is conducted in accordance with the geographical transfer policy. (See chapter two of this handbook, "Geographical Transfer Policy.")

Reassignment is preceded by a meeting of the supervisor with the faculty member to review the reasons for reassignment, which are presented in writing to the faculty member. This written review shall include a deadline for a response to the reasons for reassignment from the faculty member, which shall be no less than five working days after the written review. The response is made to the supervisor who may reconsider the decision to reassign or proceed with the proposed reassignment.

In cases of reduction in salary and/or transfer to a staff position, the proposed salary reduction or reassignment to a staff position must be reviewed and approved by the senior administrator. In these cases, the effective date of the reassignment shall be no sooner than 90 days following senior administrator approval, unless mutually agreed upon by all parties.

## **7.6 Dismissal for Cause**

Members of the administrative and professional faculty may be dismissed for cause. Stated causes for dismissal shall be documented and shall include, but are not limited to, unacceptable

or unsatisfactory performance; unethical conduct; misconduct that interferes with the capacity of the employee to perform effectively the requirements of the position; unsatisfactory attendance; falsifying credentials or any records—including but not limited to vouchers, reports, insurance claims, time records, leave records, or other official state or federal documents; unauthorized removal or damage of records or property belonging to others; acts of physical violence; criminal convictions for acts of conduct occurring on or off the job that are plainly related to job performance or are of such a nature that to continue the employee in the assigned position would constitute negligence in regard to the agency's duties to the public, students, or to other state employees; or violation of university policies. With approval by the provost or the vice president for human resources, as appropriate, an A/P faculty member may be suspended with or without pay during an internal or external investigation of any act(s) that may lead to dismissal.

Dismissal for cause is preceded by a meeting of the supervisor and a next-level administrator with the faculty member to review the reasons for dismissal, which are presented in writing to the employee. The meeting requirement may be satisfied in ways other than a face-to-face on-campus session, if there is a likelihood of threat to the health or safety of students, other employees, or property. With approval of the provost or vice president for human resources, as appropriate, the supervisor may suspend the A/P faculty member with or without pay until the effective date of dismissal or until the employee is authorized to return to work.

The faculty member is given a minimum of three working days to respond to the reasons for dismissal. The response is made to the supervisor, who then makes a final decision and communicates it to the faculty member. The faculty member may invoke the applicable grievance procedure.

Filing a grievance does not constitute cause for dismissal.

### **7.6.1 Imposition of Sanctions other than Dismissal**

Minor sanctions include, but are not limited to, verbal or written reprimand. As compared to severe sanctions, minor sanctions usually do not involve a financial loss or penalty.

A severe sanction generally involves a significant loss or penalty to a faculty member such as, but not limited to a reduction in title, responsibilities, and salary; or suspension without pay for a period not to exceed one year imposed for unacceptable conduct and/or a serious breach of university policy.

Routine personnel actions such as a recommendation for a below average or no merit increase, reassignment, or removal of an administrative stipend do not constitute “sanctions” within the meaning of this policy. A personnel action such as these may be a valid issue for grievance under procedures defined in this chapter, “Valid Issues for Grievance.”

Process for imposing a minor sanction: If a supervisor believes the conduct of a faculty member justifies imposition of a minor sanction, the faculty member is notified in writing of the proposed sanction and provided an opportunity to respond. A faculty member who believes that a severe sanction has been incorrectly imposed under this section, or that a minor sanction has been unjustly imposed, may file a grievance following procedures outlined in this chapter, “Grievance Policy and Procedures for Administrative and Professional Faculty.”

**Process for imposing a severe sanction:** The conduct of a faculty member, although not constituting adequate cause for dismissal, may be sufficiently grave to justify imposition of a severe sanction.

Imposition of a severe sanction follows the same procedures as dismissal for cause.

### **7.7 Abolition of Position**

Members of the administrative and professional faculty on regular appointments may be removed in the event of financial hardship within a department or school that cannot be alleviated by ordinary budgeting practices, or upon reduction of the specific services for which they were employed. A minimum of 90 calendar days' notice is given in such circumstances. If an A/P faculty member on a regular appointment is separated involuntarily due to budget reduction, reorganization, or workforce downsizing, the faculty member may be eligible for [severance in accordance with Policy 4245](#).

Administrative and professional faculty with tenure or continued appointment and whose A/P position is abolished return to their academic department or school.

### **7.8 Grievance Policy and Procedures for Administrative and Professional Faculty**

The following procedure is provided as the means for resolution of grievances against a supervisor or member(s) of the university administration brought by members of the administrative and professional faculty. The steps in the grievance process will, in part, be guided by the reporting relationships of the employees involved in the grievance. Step one and two administrators involved in responding to a grievance should consult with the vice president for human resources and/or the vice provost for faculty affairs who may involve additional parties as appropriate. The grievant, and those involved in responding to grievances, may consult with the [Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President](#) for additional information.

#### **7.8.1 Ombuds, Mediation Services, and Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation**

**Informal Dialogue:** It should be possible to resolve most faculty concerns or complaints through informal communication among colleagues working together in the academic enterprise. Accordingly, an A/P faculty member who feels there is a grievance is encouraged to take it to the immediate supervisor in the collegial spirit of problem solving rather than as a confrontation between adversaries.

**University Ombuds:** Any member of the university community may visit the [Virginia Tech Office of Interactive Communication and Empowerment \(VOICE\)](#). The Ombuds listens and explores options for addressing and resolving concerns or complaints. The Ombuds Office does not have the authority to make decisions or to reverse any decision made or actions taken by university authorities. The Ombuds Office supplements, but does not replace, the university's existing resources for conflict resolution and its systems of review and adjudication.

Communications with the Ombuds Office are considered confidential. The Ombuds Office will not accept legal notice on behalf of the university, and information provided to the Ombuds Office will not constitute such notice to the university. Should someone wish to make the university formally aware of a particular problem, the Ombuds Office can provide information on how to do so. The only exception to this pledge of confidentiality is where the Ombuds Office determines that there is an imminent risk of serious harm, or if disclosure is required by law.



To preserve independence and neutrality, the Ombuds Office reports directly to the president. The Ombuds Office does not keep permanent records of confidential communications.

**Reconciliation:** Reconciliation is useful if the individual feels the issue may be amenable to, but will require time for, negotiation or if the individual is unsure whether the concern is a legitimate issue for a grievance, or if personal relations between the parties involved in the matter have become strained. Contact [Faculty Affairs in the provost's office for information on Reconciliation.](#)

The [Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation](#) may conduct reconciliation between an A/P faculty member and the supervisor. Reconciliation may include fact-finding and engaging the appropriate parties in negotiating a resolution. Engaging the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is not required prior to filing a grievance.

For a potential grievance issue to qualify for consideration by the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation, the A/P faculty member must contact the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation within 30 calendar days of the date the grievant knew, or should have known, of the event or action that is the basis for the potential grievance.

Administrative and professional faculty members may also consult the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation about serious disagreements with immediate supervisors or other university administrators concerning issues that may not be eligible for consideration within the grievance process. If the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation is unable to resolve the matter within 30 calendar days, the chair sends a letter to the A/P faculty member stating such, providing the appropriate information about the formal grievance procedure if the A/P faculty member should choose to pursue the matter, and documenting that the matter was brought forward within the prescribed 30-day period. A copy of this letter is provided to the vice president for human resources with a copy to the vice provost for faculty affairs when appropriate. The A/P faculty member has five weekdays after receiving the letter from the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Reconciliation to initiate a formal grievance, if so choosing, by following the procedures below and providing a copy of the letter from the chair of the reconciliation team to the supervisor, validating the timeliness of the grievance.

**Mediation:** [Mediation is available through the Office for Equity and Accessibility.](#) Mediation is a voluntary, confidential process through which trained neutral third persons (mediators) assist people to express their concerns and develop solutions to the dispute in a safe and structured environment. Assistance with mediation is available through Human Resources. Because mediation is voluntary, both parties must agree to participate for mediation to occur. A/P faculty members and supervisors are encouraged to consider using mediation to resolve disputes or to help address a conflict between an A/P faculty member and another member of the Virginia Tech community.

**Role of Mediators:** Mediators do not make judgments, determine facts, or decide the outcome; instead, they facilitate discussion between the participants, who identify the solutions best suited to their situation. No agreement is made unless and until it is acceptable to the participants.

**Requesting Mediation:** Mediation is available at any time, without the filing of a grievance. Additionally, mediation may be requested by any party during the grievance process prior to step three. If, after the initiation of a formal grievance, both parties agree to participate in mediation, the grievance is placed on administrative hold until the mediation process is complete. If the parties come to a resolution of the dispute through mediation, the parties are responsible to each

other for ensuring that the provisions of the agreement are followed. If the parties are not able to reach a mutual resolution to the dispute through mediation, the grievant may request that the grievance be reactivated, and the process continues.

Mediation differs from faculty reconciliation in that mediators do not engage in fact-finding or in evaluation of decisions. Both mediation and reconciliation, however, are voluntary; no party is required to participate in either process.

### **7.8.2 The Formal Grievance Procedure**

The grievant may pursue the issue as a formal grievance through the following procedure. Supervisors and administrators will cooperate with the grievant in the mechanics of processing the grievance, but the grievant alone is responsible for preparation of the case. See “Valid issues for Grievance” in this chapter.

The number of steps in the process is determined by the reporting line of the grievant. Thus, if three steps do not exist between the grievant and the president, then the available number of steps is used.

The grievance must be well described, and the relief requested must be specified on the grievance form. [A/P faculty, grievance forms are available on the provost's Faculty Forms page.](#)

The Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President will maintain an active list of trained A/P faculty members who can provide consultation to an A/P faculty colleague who is preparing to file a formal grievance. Upon being contacted by an A/P faculty colleague who is preparing to file a formal grievance, the trained consulting A/P faculty member will be able to provide information on and answer questions about the formal grievance process, completion of the A/P faculty grievance form, and available university resources. The consulting A/P faculty member will not submit a grievance form for another A/P faculty member or serve on any panel within the grievance process in a matter to which they served as the consulting A/P faculty member.

**Step one:** The grievant must submit a written statement of the grievance to the step one administrator (the department head, chair, school director, or appropriate supervisor/director; for A/P faculty in Virginia Cooperative Extension, the district director or appropriate step one administrator) and to the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President within 30 calendar days of the date identified, or the grievant should have known, of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. If appropriate, the step one administrator will provide a copy of the grievance to the supervisor of the grievant.

**Grievability Panel:** The Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President, within ten weekdays of receiving a copy of the grievance form, will convene a grievability panel. The panel consists of the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President and two A/P faculty senators. The panel meets to deliberate and determine the admissibility of the matter to the grievance process. (See “Valid Issues for Grievance” in this chapter) A written report summarizing the deliberation and documenting the ruling of the grievability panel will be provided to all parties. The decision of the grievability panel is final. If the issue is deemed grievable by the panel, the step one administrator provides a written response to the grievant within five weekdays of receiving the grievability panel's written response. Step one administrator's written response should cite reasons for action taken or not taken. If the written response of the department head,

chair, school director, or appropriate supervisor/director is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

If the grievability panel determines the issues presented by the grievant are not grievable, then the process is concluded.

**Step two:** If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response by the step one administrator is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance to the step two administrator (usually a dean or vice president) by checking the appropriate place on the grievance form and sending it within five weekdays of receiving the written response. The step two administrator for Extension A/P faculty (such as Extension agents) is the dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Following receipt of the grievance form, the step two administrator or designated representative meets with the grievant within five weekdays. The grievant may request that a chosen representative from among the university general faculty be present. Unless the grievant is represented by a member of the faculty who is also a lawyer, the step two administrator does not have legal counsel present.

If the grievance involves a programmatic issue for an Extension A/P faculty member where responsibility for that program lies with a different dean, the designated step two administrator consults with the programmatic dean before rendering a decision.

The step two administrator gives the grievant a written decision within five weekdays after the meeting, citing reasons for the decision. If the step two administrator's written response to the grievance is satisfactory to the grievant, it ends the matter.

**Step three:** If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response by the step two administrator is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance to the step three administrator. The step three administrator is the vice president for human resources or the vice provost for faculty affairs. The grievant must advance the complaint to the step three administrator within five weekdays of receiving the written response from the step two administrator. If the grievant works in a college or academic vice president's division, the step three administrator will provide a copy of the grievance to the provost.

Advancement of a grievance to step three includes consideration by an impartial Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate hearing panel unless the grievant petitions the step three administrator to bypass the hearing panel and rule on the grievance. If the step three administrator accepts the request to rule on the grievance, there is no subsequent opportunity for the grievance to be heard by a Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate hearing panel. If the step three administrator does not accept the petition, a Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate hearing panel is formed to review the grievance as outlined in these procedures. An Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate hearing panel may also be convened to determine whether a complaint may be grieved under university policy.

Within five weekdays, the step three administrator, or appropriate designated representative, acknowledges receipt of the grievance and forwards a copy of the "Hearing Procedures of the Committee on Administrative and Professional Faculty Grievances" to parties in the grievance process. The step three administrator also forwards a copy of the grievance immediately to the chair of Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate.

**Hearing Panel:** A grievance hearing for A/P faculty is conducted by an ad hoc panel selected by the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate from the current A/P Faculty Senate membership, including Senators and Alternates. A hearing panel consists of three A/P Faculty Senators or Alternates, an alternate panel member, and the non-voting chair. The chair polls all appointees to ensure that they have no conflict of interest in the case. Either party may challenge one of the appointments, including the alternate. Other replacements are made only for cause. The alternate serves as a replacement panel member if the need arises.

To ensure uniformity in practice, the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate serves as the non-voting chair of each hearing panel. If the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President has a conflict of interest concerning a case, the chair appoints a replacement from among the Administrative and Professional Faculty senators who serve on CAPFA at-large to serve as chair of the hearing panel. In the unlikely event that all A/P faculty senators and alternates have a conflict of interest concerning a case, the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President, in consultation with the A/P Faculty Senate president, and an appropriate senior administrative official (president, provost, vice president for human resources), will appoint a non-voting chair and panelists from the A/P faculty at large.

**Hearings:** After the members of the hearing panel are appointed, the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President requests that each party to the grievance provide relevant documentation to be shared among the parties and the hearing panel. The panel holds its initial hearing with both principals present within 15 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate. If the panel feels it needs to investigate the case further, or requires more information, or desires to hear witnesses, the hearing is adjourned until the panel completes the necessary work or scheduling can occur. The hearing is then reconvened as appropriate (and within the 45-day period required by this policy, unless agreed upon by both parties).

Each party to the grievance may have a representative present during the sessions of the hearing at which testimony is presented. The representative may speak if requested. Representatives may be legal counsel, if both parties are so represented, but if the grievant does not wish to have legal counsel at a hearing, neither party to the grievance may have legal counsel present.

These impartial panel hearings are administrative functions, not adversarial proceedings. Therefore, if legal counsels are present, they must understand that the proceedings do not follow courtroom or trial procedures and rules. Participation by legal counsel is at the invitation of the parties they represent and is subject to the rulings of the chair of the hearing panel.

**Findings and Recommendations:** The hearing panel concludes its work and makes its recommendations within 45 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President. The time limit for consideration may be extended by agreement of both parties.

The hearing panel formulates written findings and recommendations regarding disposition of the grievance and forwards copies to the step three administrator and parties to the grievance.

**Action of the Step Three Administrator:** The step three administrator meets with the grievant within 10 weekdays after receiving the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel to discuss the case and advise the grievant about the prospects for disposition of the case. Within 10 weekdays of that meeting the step three administrator sends to the grievant the decision in

writing concerning the disposition of the grievance. If the step three administrator's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendations of the hearing panel, that ends the matter.

**Step four:** If the step three administrator's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendations of the hearing panel, the grievant may appeal in writing to the university president within 20 calendar days. The president's decision is final.

### **7.8.3 Timeliness of Grievance and Procedural Compliance**

A grievance must be brought forward in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of the grievant to initiate the grievance process within 30 calendar days of the date identified, or should have known, of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. The university administration is not required to accept a grievance for processing if the grievant does not meet the 30-day deadline, except in cases of demonstrated good cause.

Scheduled commitments made prior to the time of filing or advancement of a grievance that preclude action by either of the parties to the grievance automatically extend time limits for their duration unless this would be demonstrably harmful to the fair processing of the grievance. In such cases, on written request by the grievant to the appropriate office for that step, the grievance is advanced to the next step in the grievance process.

If the grievant does not follow the time limits specified in the grievance procedure it is assumed that the last proposed resolution is accepted as satisfactory. If the grievant desires to advance the grievance after the appropriate specified time limits have lapsed, the administrator who receives the late submission notifies the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President in writing, who determines if there was good cause for the delay. If so, the grievance proceeds. If not, the process ends with the most recently proposed resolution in force. The finding on the matter by the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President is communicated to both parties in writing.

If either party to a grievance charges the other with procedural violations, other than time limit issues, the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President rules on the question, as in disputes about the validity of procedural issues qualifying for the grievance procedure. The Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President has the following options: The Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President can either find no significant procedural violation occurred, in which case the grievance process continues unaffected, or that a significant procedural violation did occur. If the step one or step two administrator committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance automatically qualifies for advancement to the next step in the grievance process. If the grievant committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance process ends at that point for that grievance with the last proposed resolution established as the final disposition of the case.

### **7.8.4 Valid Issues for Grievance**

For this process, a grievance is defined as a complaint by an A/P faculty member alleging a violation, misinterpretation, or incorrect application of a policy, procedure, or practice of the university that directly affects the grievant. Some examples of valid issues for filing a grievance are termination for cause; improperly or unfairly determined personnel decisions that result in an unsatisfactory annual performance evaluation; unreasonable merit adjustment or salary level;

excessive teaching load/work assignments; reprisals for activities protected by law or policy; substantive error in the application of policy; matters relating to academic freedom.

**Issues not open to grievance.** While A/P faculty disputes with the university administration may be dealt with using this grievance policy, the following issues may not be made the subject of a grievance: appropriate application of policy by the university administration or the university governance system; contents of university policies and procedures; the routine assignment of university resources (e.g., space, operating funds, parking, etc.); normal actions taken, or recommendations made, by administrators or committee members acting in an official capacity in the grievance process; those items falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures for example, complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment, complaints related to unprofessional or unethical conduct, complaints related to non-reappointment, promotion, or abolition of position).

See chapter two of this handbook for information regarding “Allegations of Unprofessional or Unethical Conduct” against an A/P faculty member.

The Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate does not consider the subject of a grievance while it is simultaneously under review by another committee or panel of the university.

#### **7.8.5 Particular Concerns and Definitions**

Timelines stated in the grievance policy indicate the number of days within which the other party should receive notification. Electronic submission from a departmental or school office within the specified time frame is acceptable. This is immediately followed by submission by mail of the original form and any related materials.

Time limits are subject to an extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion make such an agreement. (An agreement form to extend the grievance response time is available on the [provost's Faculty Forms page](#).)

The principals and the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President, if necessary, negotiate extensions of time limits at step three. In case of disagreement, the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President rules on time extension and procedural questions or recommendations designed to expedite the proceedings while providing peer review of the grievance.

If an A/P faculty member is away from the assigned work location at the time the event or action is discovered that is the basis for a grievance, the 30-day period during which the grievant must meet with the supervisor or step one administrator to initiate the grievance process begins when the A/P faculty member returns to the assigned work location. If the date of return causes a delay of such length that the grievance, or its resolution, is not timely, the grievant may submit the written grievance as prescribed in step one by mail or email attachment during absence from the primary work location.

“Weekdays,” as used in this procedure, include Monday through Friday only and only when the university is open and those days are not national, state, or religious holidays relevant to the principals in the grievance.

To protect a grievant from undue pressure in the pursuit of a grievance, if a grievant becomes ill and takes sick leave, the grievance process stops until such time as the grievant can resume duties. Exceptions to this provision are made at the request of the grievant, but only if the grievant

obtains and produces medical certification that proceeding with the grievance will not be harmful to the health of the grievant or exacerbate the ailment that required taking sick leave.

All costs of legal counsel employed by a grievant are borne by the grievant.

If a grievant is employed away from Blacksburg and is required to travel away from their duty station in resolution of their grievance, the university pays all travel costs permitted under state regulations.

In the event that an A/P faculty member discovers there is a grievance about actions by an administrator above the level of the supervisor that directly involve the A/P faculty member, or with actions by an administrator not in the department/unit or school that directly involve the A/P faculty member, the grievant initiates the grievance process by seeking the intervention of the supervisor within 30 calendar days of the date when the grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. If that effort does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, the grievant, after consulting the supervisor, may file the grievance form for A/P faculty at the appropriate level or with the appropriate administrative office to initiate response from the administrator perceived as the source of the action causing the grievance. The grievance process then proceeds from that level onward in usual fashion.

A grievance filed by an A/P faculty member concerning an action of either the provost, senior vice president and chief business officer, vice provost for faculty affairs, or the vice president for human resources is handled by the Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President and an impartial hearing panel, but the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel are sent to the president for ruling. A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the president of the university is dealt with by a special panel appointed by the provost in consultation with the chair of the Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs.

Any final resolution of a grievance must be consonant with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and university policy.

Once a grievance is resolved, either to the satisfaction of the grievant, or if not to the satisfaction of the grievant, by the action of the senior administrator in consonance with the hearing panel recommendations, or by the ruling of the president, that specific grievance is closed and may not be made the subject of another grievance.

### **7.8.6 Overview of the Formal Grievance Process for Administrative and Professional Faculty**

Below is an abbreviated overview of the grievance process and deadlines. Refer to, “The Formal Grievance Procedure” in this chapter for specific details and options available in each step of the grievance process.

Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion make such an agreement. (An agreement form to extend the grievance response time is available on the [provost's Faculty Forms page](#).)

The validity of a grievance under university policy can be determined by CAPFA at any point in the process.

<b>Step One</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 30 days of event</b>	1a.	Grievant submits written grievance to step one administrator (for Extension A/P faculty this is usually the district director) and Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President.
	<b>Within 10 weekdays</b>	1b.
	1c.	Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President convenes a grievability panel to determine the admissibility of the issue to the grievance process per chapter seven, "Valid Issues for Grievance." The grievability ruling will be documented and a written report on the deliberation sent to all parties concerned.
	1d.	If the issue is not grievable, the grievance process concludes.
	1e.	If the issue is grievable, the step one administrator responds to grievance in writing on the grievance form.
	1f.	If step one administrator's response is satisfactory to grievant, that ends the matter.
	1g.	If step one administrator's response is not satisfactory to the grievant, move to step two within 5 weekdays.
<b>Step Two</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	2a.	Grievant submits written grievance to the step two administrator, usually the dean or vice president (for Extension A/P faculty, this is the dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences). If the grievance involves a programmatic issue for an Extension A/P faculty member where responsibility for that program lies with a different dean, the designated step two administrator consults with the programmatic dean before rendering a decision.
	2b.	Step two administrator meets with the grievant and provides a written response
	2c.	If step two administrator's response is satisfactory to grievant, that ends the matter.
	2d.	If step two administrator's response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step three within 5 weekdays.



<b>Step Three</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	3a.	Grievant advances grievance form to the step three administrator (the vice president for human resources or the vice provost for faculty affairs) who then, depending on reporting structure, shares a copy of the grievance with the provost.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	3b.	Step three administrator acknowledges receipt of grievance and forwards copy to Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President.
<b>Within 5 weekdays</b>	3c.	Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President acknowledges in writing to grievant that copy of grievance has been received from the step three administrator.
<b>Within 15 weekdays</b>	3d.	Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Vice President convenes a hearing panel that holds its initial meeting with both principals.
<b>Within 45 weekdays</b>	3e.	The hearing panel concludes its work and makes recommendation to step three administrator and grievant.
<b>Within 10 weekdays</b>	3f.	Step three administrator meets with grievant.
<b>Within 10 weekdays</b>	3g.	Step three administrator notifies grievant in writing of the decision.
	3h.	If the step three administrator's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendations of the hearing panel that ends the matter.
	3i.	If the step three administrator's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendations of the hearing panel, the grievant may appeal in writing to the president within 20 calendar days.
<b>Step Four</b>	<b>Step Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within 20 calendar days</b>	4a.	Grievant appeals in writing to president.
	4b.	The president's decision is final.

## 7.9 Leave

Consult the [Human Resources Leave website](#) for information. Administrative and professional faculty are eligible for the following types of leave: administrative leave, annual leave, disaster

relief leave, educational leave, family leave, paid parental leave, leave without pay, military leave, sick leave, and special leave.

Members of the administrative and professional faculty who have tenure or continued appointment may, under certain special conditions, request [research leave](#), particularly when they are returning to instructional faculty status. All study-research leaves and research assignments require approval by the Board of Visitors. [Consult faculty affairs in the office of the provost.](#)

### **7.10 Consulting Activities for Virginia Cooperative Extension Faculty**

See chapter two of this handbook for information on Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Commitment. Consistent with the university's policy and procedures on consulting activities, additional restrictions may be imposed on the consulting activity of Virginia Cooperative Extension faculty members. These restrictions are imposed to give further assurance that consulting approval is not granted for assistance, that is the usual responsibility of faculty members within Extension.

It is recognized that the outreach responsibilities of Extension are broad and, thus, program assistance parameters are difficult to define. Consequently, the following procedures are designed to provide judgmental decisions by appropriate supervisory staff for consulting requests in ambiguous areas of program responsibilities.

A Request to Engage in External Activity must be filed using the university's online Disclosure and Management System. The request outlines the nature of the consulting activity and why it falls outside the usual responsibilities of Extension, and is sent to the department head, chair, or immediate supervisor along with a letter outlining the nature of the consulting activity and why it falls outside the usual responsibilities of Extension. (The form is available on the Conflicts of Interest and Commitment website.) Typically, consulting activities do not involve university sponsorship.

The department head, chair, school director, or immediate supervisor reviews the Request to Engage in External Activity Form 13010A and either approves or disapproves it. If approval is granted, the request is sent to the college dean for approval. The director of Virginia Cooperative Extension grants final approval. If disapproval is exercised at any level, the request is sent back through the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor, to the faculty member along with an explanation for the action. Additional review and approval by the university conflict of interest officer is required for disclosures involving business ownership interests of investigators (or their family members), significant financial interests related to sponsored research, or other sponsored activities, employment or funding of students/trainees/staff, and any proposed management plan.

Decisions are based upon, but not limited to, the following: consistency with guidelines stipulated in chapter two of this handbook, "Consulting Activities for Virginia Cooperative Extension Faculty"; whether the area of consulting is found to be within or outside usual Extension responsibilities; and whether the time required falls within the number of consulting days allowed.

## CHAPTER EIGHT - GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

### 8.0 Policies for Graduate Assistants, Graduate Research Assistants, and Graduate Teaching Assistants

Consult the [Graduate Student Catalog](#) and [Graduate Assistantship Information on the Graduate School webpage](#) for additional information.

#### 8.1 Graduate Student Appointments

[Policy 6210, "Management of Graduate Assistantships and Tuition Remission"](#) is administered by the Graduate School, establishes the standards for the eligibility and management of graduate assistantships and associated benefits including tuition remission. Graduate assistantships are a unique form of university appointment that allow graduate students to gain valuable training and professional experience in teaching, research or administration while providing service to the university.

Since the responsibilities or requirements of graduate students vary by academic discipline, each department is required to define expectations for its students on assistantships. These graduate student appointments do not carry faculty status or other faculty rights or responsibilities.

**Graduate Assistant.** Graduate assistants (GAs) are graduate students who provide academic and program support. GA responsibilities may be administrative or academic in nature. Administrative responsibilities might consist of duties unrelated directly to teaching or research (such as academic advising, program planning, advising student groups, and assisting with the administration of student services offices). Academic responsibilities may include grading examinations, problem sets, and/or lab assignments, setting up displays for lectures or laboratory sections, and preparing or maintaining equipment used in laboratory sections.

**Graduate Research Assistant.** Graduate research assistants (GRAs) are graduate students conducting academically significant research under the direction of a faculty member, who is generally a Principal Investigator on an external grant or contract.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant.** Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) may provide academic program support under the supervision of a faculty member. GTAs may assist faculty members in the department in teaching undergraduate courses, including laboratory teaching assignments, or in providing other appropriate professional assistance, including grading examinations, problem sets, and/or lab assignments, setting up displays for lectures and laboratory sections, and preparing or maintaining equipment used in laboratory sections.

#### 8.2 Required Qualification and Teaching Credentials for Instructors of Record Including Graduate Students

Consult [Qualifications for Teaching](#) on the provost's webpage for information on qualifications for teaching. The teaching department or school has the responsibility to document the qualifications for teaching for any Instructor of Record. Per the university's regional accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), a GTA who is assigned full responsibility for teaching an undergraduate course as an Instructor of Record must have a master's degree in the discipline being taught or 18 hours of graduate-level course work in their teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations. GTAs lacking this training are assigned to work under the supervision of a faculty member who is the

Instructor of Record for the course. Graduate students who will be appointed as GTAs must complete the [GRAD 5004 GTA workshop](#). The Graduate School's approval is required before a graduate student is allowed to teach graduate courses.

### **8.3 Additional Employment by Graduate Students with a Full-Time Assistantship**

Given individual circumstances, graduate students on a full-time graduate assistantship may, at times, wish to pursue additional employment. Consult [policy 6210, "Management of Graduate Assistantships and Tuition Remission"](#). Graduate students receiving full-time assistantships are not prohibited from seeking additional employment. In the interest of their professional development and maintenance of satisfactory academic progress, students seeking additional employment should consult with their academic advisors, and when appropriate their assistantship providers, regarding the fulfillment of their assistantship and graduate study responsibilities. The Graduate School must be notified in advance of any additional employment plan. The Graduate School should be consulted to assist with the resolution of any conflicts of interest that may arise. Attempted resolution of conflict occurs at the departmental or school level first, and then can be referred, if necessary, to the Graduate School and/or [Office of the Graduate Ombudsman](#).

In evaluating the merits of additional employment, including outside employment, graduate students and their advisors should consider the following:

Employment by a company owned in whole or part by the faculty chair of the student's dissertation or thesis committee presents the potential for serious conflicts of interest. In such cases, another faculty member of equal or greater rank must serve as chair or co-chair of the advisory committee.

It is inappropriate for any student to receive remuneration directly from the external funding organization while also being employed as a graduate assistant or wage earner on a contract with that same organization.

It is inappropriate for any student to work for an employer who is in direct competition with a current funding source. International graduate students on assistantships may be prohibited from any additional employment by their specific visa status.

## CHAPTER NINE - INSTRUCTION-RELATED POLICIES

### 9.0 Instruction-Related Policies

See [Office of the University Registrar website](#)

#### 9.1 Assignment of Academic Responsibilities

Assignments of teaching load and academic advising are the responsibility of the department head, chair or school director and may vary from one term to the next depending on the departmental or school requirements. Assignments should involve consultation with the faculty member, and in cases involving non-routine assignments—such as those requiring extensive travel—consultation is required. Ultimately, authority rests with the department head, chair or school director to make the final assignment. Although the usual load for those engaged only in teaching is 12 didactic hours, the loads vary widely and are usually adjusted to permit time for other scholarly activities—for outreach which is related to the mission of the university and the faculty member's disciplinary expertise, and for faculty development related to the quality of instruction. A didactic hour is defined here as one contact hour in a lecture course or 0.60 hour for each contact hour in a course designated as a laboratory course.

Faculty members are expected to be available two weeks prior to the first day of classes and two weeks following commencement. The discretion of the department head, chair, or school director is recognized in assigning duties during periods when the university is not in session. Faculty members are expected to inform their department heads, chairs, or school directors of their whereabouts during such periods.

Instructors with distinctive assignments and work schedules will have these responsibilities conveyed in the terms of faculty offer letter at the time of appointment.

##### 9.1.1 Special Authority Conferred to the University Registrar During States of Emergency

As outlined in [Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 312](#), special, time-limited authority may be granted to the university registrar during periods when the university is operating under a state of emergency declared by the president of the University. This authority enables the university registrar to evaluate and implement impartial standards and guidelines related to grading.

##### 9.1.2 Summer and Winter Sessions

Teaching loads during the summer and winter sessions are tightly controlled. Summer and winter teaching appointments are the responsibility of the department head, chair, or school director. (See chapter two of this handbook "Summer and Winter Appointments.")

##### 9.1.3 Independent Study and Undergraduate Research

Consult the [Office of Undergraduate Research](#). The courses designated as Undergraduate Independent Study and Undergraduate Research are generally unique educational experiences between an instructor and a student. The student, by way of the faculty member, is required to receive prior approval for such studies by the instructor's department head, chair, or school director and by the dean. Undergraduate students are limited to 12 hours of combined Independent Study and Undergraduate Research to be counted toward completion of the degree (unless specifically required by the program check sheet). Courses designated as Graduate Independent Study/Special Study require approval of the instructor's department head, chair, or school director only. The student, by way of the faculty member, is required to receive prior

approval for such studies. Approval forms are available in the colleges. Usually, these courses do not count in the teaching load of a faculty member.

The instructor of record for each Independent Study and/or Undergraduate Research course is required to provide a significant amount of supervision to the student via appropriate contact hours as defined by [Policy 6901, "Definition of a Credit Hour"](#). A contract between the student and faculty member should be developed and must include reference to specific contact hours with the faculty member as well as individualized work. Additional information can be found on the [Office of the University Registrar's website](#).

### **9.1.4 Graduate and Professional Program Standards and Policies**

Each graduate and professional degree-granting program in the university is responsible for the conduct of the program and designates a faculty member to serve as liaison with the appropriate college dean(s) and the vice president and dean for graduate education. Additional information can be found on the [Graduate School webpage](#). Further, each graduate degree-granting program formulates and retains a current policy statement that spells out criteria governing its program. Copies are filed with the appropriate college dean(s) and the vice president and dean for graduate education. Policy statements address faculty participation on graduate student advisory committees (thesis and dissertation advisors; advisory committee membership); admissions procedures and requirements; and management of graduate students (orientation/advising; manuals, guides, handbooks; assistantships—selection procedures, obligations; evaluation of satisfactory progress towards the degree).

### **9.2 Scheduling of Classes**

The Office of the University Registrar coordinates the preparation of the timetable of classes and disseminates this information. The department head, chair, school director or a designated scheduler prepares proposed class schedules in response to a call from the university registrar. The university registrar reconciles the material provided with the approved catalog of university courses, established scheduling patterns and allocations, and requests of other departments or schools. Individual professors address scheduling issues through the department head, chair, school director or the designated scheduler.

The university registrar assigns classrooms. Moving the location of courses is possible only with the approval of the department scheduler and the university registrar. Enrollments may not exceed the posted room capacity. Commonwealth of Virginia fire code specifications do not allow students to be seated in the aisles or on the floor.

### **9.3 Registration for Classes**

The registration period for each term occurs during the regular preceding term. New and transfer students register for the fall semester during online summer orientation academic advising. Students who enter the university for the first time in the spring semester or a summer term register in the usual manner.

The university registrar works with each department or school to amend course offerings by increasing the capacity of the section within limits for the assigned classroom; creating new sections with times subject to availability of suitable classrooms; and canceling sections for which the demand is too small to justify keeping the section.

Undergraduate classes with fewer than 15 students and graduate classes with fewer than six are reviewed by the department head, chair, or school director and the dean and canceled unless

there are compelling reasons for keeping the class. In the summer and winter terms, the department head, chair, or school director and the director of summer and winter sessions review undergraduate classes with an enrollment of fewer than 10 and graduate classes with fewer than eight. Unless there are compelling reasons to offer the course, it is canceled. The registrar's office requires that departments or schools notify enrolled students of any change or cancellation of a course section. This notification should be as timely as possible for students to make alternate plans.

Students submit course requests during the published pre-registration period. After departments or schools make the necessary adjustments based on course requests, completed schedules are made available to students. Students may adjust their schedules during the add/drop period.

### **9.3.1 Add/Drop Period**

At the beginning of the term, students may add courses through the end of the fifth day of classes and drop courses through the 30<sup>th</sup> day of classes. During the summer, students may add courses through the end of the third day of classes and drop courses through the end of the fifth for each part of the term.

During the winter term, students may add courses through the first day and drop classes through the first day of the term.

Dropping or adding courses becomes necessary if a student has an incomplete schedule, changes curriculum, fails a course in the previous term, or fails to pay fees on time, which removes the student from all classes.

The names of students who have properly added the course immediately appear on the instructor's class listing available via Hokie SPA. Faculty should not add (register) students in Canvas (Learning Management System).

Students who are properly registered will automatically be added to the learning management system daily during the add period.

### **9.3.2 Force-Add Requests**

Force-add transactions are final solutions for critical scheduling problems in required courses. The force-add request requires approval by the course instructor or designated departmental representative. (Students may check with the department or school for departmental or school policy.) If a force-add request is approved, the student must retain the approval form copy to verify enrollment with the instructor. An "add" processed through the force-add process overrides all other courses on a student's schedule and may create schedule conflicts. Do not process force-adds above the physical capacity of the scheduled room; doing so will not guarantee relocation of the course. Enrollments may not exceed the posted room capacity.

Commonwealth of Virginia fire code specifications do not allow students to be seated in the aisles or on the floor.

### **9.3.3 Class Rolls**

Up-to-date class rolls are available to instructors via Hokie SPA. To obtain access to the class roll, a faculty member must be the instructor of record in Banner. The instructor of record is expected to inform students whose names do not appear on the displayed class roll. A student should contact the academic dean for assistance to correct inconsistencies. Graded work should not be returned to these students until their names are officially added to the class roll.

## 9.4 Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials

The University Bookstore is responsible for providing textbooks and related teaching supplies to the university community. Each department or school has a person designated as the departmental bookstore representative. This person serves as the main contact between the bookstore and the instructor. Pursuant to the federal Higher Education Authorization Act, Public Law 110-315 (HEOA 2008), the Code of Virginia §23 1-1308 amended in 2018, and [Policy 6400, "Policy on University Textbook Sales"](#), administrators, faculty, university bookstores, and publishers are "to ensure that students have access to affordable course materials by decreasing costs to students and enhancing transparency and disclosure with respect to the selection, purchase, sale, and use of course materials." Provisions of the law require publication of textbook requirements prior to registration. Requests to the bookstore for textbooks and other instructional materials are routed through the department or school's bookstore representative.

By law, university "guidelines shall ensure that faculty textbook adoptions are made with sufficient lead time to university-managed or contract-managed bookstores so as to confirm availability of the requested materials and, when possible, ensure maximum availability of used textbooks." To this end, the University Bookstore must be notified of the selection of textbooks and other materials for any fall semester class no later than April 15. The deadline for spring semester is October 15 of the year immediately preceding the spring semester.

Before a textbook may be adopted, the faculty member must confirm whether the faculty member intends to use all items ordered—particularly individual items sold as a part of a bundled package. If the faculty member does not intend to use each item in the bundled package, the faculty member is required to notify the bookstore. The bookstore then orders the individualized items if the publisher makes them available and if their procurement is cost effective for both the institution and the students. In addition, the faculty member affirmatively acknowledges the bookstore's quoted retail price of textbooks selected for use in each course.

Faculty members are encouraged to limit their use of new edition textbooks when previous editions do not differ in a substantive way as determined by the appropriate faculty member. Publishers are to document the substantive differences in any revised publication of texts.

Before adoption of a particular textbook, the respective department or school determines that a copy of the textbook is on reserve in the University Libraries during any period that the textbook is to be used. Additional information on the federal textbook requirements and guidelines may be found on the [University Registrar's HEOA Textbook Provision page](#).

In accordance Section 23.1–1308 Code of Virginia the University has adopted guidelines for the use of low-cost and no-cost open educational resources in courses offered at the university. Such guidelines may include provisions for low-cost commercially published materials. These guidelines are available on the [University Libraries Open Education: OER Overview page](#).

Faculty members should not engage in direct sale of instructional materials to students. The Code of Virginia §23 1-1308 states that, "No employee of a public institution of higher education shall demand or receive any payment, load, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services or anything, present or promised, as an inducement for requiring students to purchase a specific textbook required for course work or instruction. However, such employee may receive (i) sample copies, instructor's copies, or instructional material, not to be sold; and (ii) royalties or other compensation from sales of textbooks that include such instructor's own writing or work." See also [Policy 13010, "Conflict of Interest"](#), and [Policy 6400, "Policy on University Textbook Sales."](#)



### 9.4.1 Faculty-Authored Course Materials

A faculty member teaching a course may not receive a royalty and/or other fees beyond direct cost of production and sales for any material used as part of class activity, except for material that has received an independent external review, that has been copyrighted, and a portion of the copyright is owned by a publisher other than the author. Faculty accused of abusing the distribution of classroom material for personal financial gain are subject to review by the Committee on Faculty Ethics.

### 9.5 Grading Systems

**“A” to “F” system (undergraduate students):** The majority of course enrollments by undergraduate students at the university are graded on the traditional A-F basis, with a 12-point plus/minus grading scale. The grades “A” through “D-” represent passing grades and “F” is a failing grade. The grade of “A” should be assigned to students who meet the learning objectives outlined for the course at a level of comprehension and performance deemed excellent. The grade of “F” should be used for those students who have not demonstrated acceptable achievement with regard to the learning objectives of the course of study. An instructor may choose not to use the plus/minus system in the assignment of grades.

**“A” to “F” system (graduate students):** The grading system for graduate students is similar to the A-F system with “D” as the lowest passing grade.

**Pass/Fail system (undergraduate students):** A pass/fail grading system is available to encourage students to enrich their academic programs and explore more challenging courses outside their major without the pressures and demands of the regular grading system. The pass/fail grading option is available to all undergraduates who have completed a minimum of 30 credit hours at Virginia Tech and have a cumulative Virginia Tech grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or above. The following restrictions apply:

for students in a four-year program, the total maximum allowable credits for pass/fail shall not exceed 12 semester hours, exclusive of courses offered only pass/fail

for students in a five-year program, the total maximum allowable credits for pass/fail shall not exceed 12 semester hours, exclusive of courses offered only pass/fail, or 10% of the required hours for graduation completed at Virginia Tech—whichever is greater

a student may not enroll for more than two courses per semester on a pass/fail basis—excluding physical education activity courses and required courses offered on a P/F basis only

courses may not be changed from A-F to the P/F basis beyond the last day to drop classes without penalty

courses may not be changed from P/F to A-F beyond the last day to resign without penalty

for students in a four-year program, the total maximum allowable credits for pass/fail shall not exceed 12 semester hours, exclusive of courses offered only pass/fail

For courses offered only on a pass/fail basis, the 30-hour and 2.0 GPA requirement does not apply. Any courses taken beyond the number of hours required for graduation also may be taken pass/fail, except that no more than two courses may be taken on the P/F option per semester.

Under the pass/fail grading system for undergraduate students, a “P” is granted for earning a “D” or better in the course; otherwise, an “F” is given. The “P” or “F” is recorded on the student’s

transcript and credit given if the course is passed; if the course is failed, the “F” is considered as equivalent to an “F” received under the A-F grading system and is included in calculation of the GPA. The GPA is unaffected by a “P.” Once credit is received for a course taken on pass/fail, the course cannot be repeated under the A-F grading system.

**Pass/Fail system (graduate and veterinary medicine students):** A limited pass/fail grading system is available to encourage graduate students to explore courses outside their major. Subject to approval of the major professor, graduate students may take an unlimited number of hours of graduate course work (5000-and 6000-level) on a pass/fail basis, if outside the department or school and not on the plan of study. These courses may not be used to satisfy minimum degree requirements. All courses on the plan of study, including supporting courses, must be taken on a letter grade (A-F) basis except for those courses offered on a pass/fail basis only.

Under the pass/fail grading system for graduate students, a “P” is granted for earning a “C-” or better in the course; otherwise, an “F” is given. The GPA is unaffected by a “P.” Grades of “F” are counted in the calculation of the GPA.

**Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory system (school of medicine students):** All Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine courses have a grade mode of “S” for Satisfactory or “U” for Unsatisfactory.

Year 3 medical clerkship grading scale includes Honors (H), High Pass (HP), Pass (P) and Fail (F).

**Audit grade (undergraduate students):** A student may choose to audit a course, without the necessary prerequisites, to enhance one’s educational experience. Permission of the course instructor is required, in accordance with [Policy 6360, “Auditing Courses,”](#) and [Policy Memorandum 250, “Assignment of an Audit Grade for Undergraduate Courses.”](#) An audit is a mechanism for a student to reserve a seat in a course, with no performance evaluation required. If the student or the instructor expects evaluation of course work, then the student must enroll either for the P/F option or for a letter grade. If the instructor of record wishes to restrict the participation of auditing students in selected activities, then that is stated in the syllabus. Students are assessed the same rate of tuition and fees for audited courses as for courses taken for credit. Audited courses do not count toward full-time enrollment.

An unsatisfactory audit should be left blank in the grade column. In the case of graduate students, an e-mail should be forwarded to the graduate school requesting deletion of the course from the student's record.

**The “I” grade (Incomplete):** The “I” grade signifies incomplete work but does not affect a student’s GPA. It is assigned at the discretion of the instructor only. The “I” may be used when a student is unable to take the final examination during examination week, but the instructor may wish to confirm the legitimacy of the request with the Schiffert Health Center or the student’s academic dean. Except for certain laboratory courses, “I” grades must be removed by the end of the student’s first subsequent semester of enrollment or one calendar year from the date of the original “I” grade. An official change-of- grade must be made in Hokie SPA by the instructor to remove an “I” grade and submitted to the department or school of the course. Incompletes not removed during the designated time are changed to “F” and calculated in the student’s GPA. It is expected that a Documentation for Assignment of an Incomplete Grade(I) for Undergraduate Students form, available on the University Registrar’s website, be submitted to the college’s

associate dean as record of the Incomplete grade contract between the faculty member and student.

**The "NG" grade (No Grade):** The "NG" grade is given when a student's name appears on the class roll, but the student has never attended class or submitted work for grading.

**The "X" grade (Continuing Course):** The "X" mark shows that pursuit of the project begun in the course will be continued. The "X" does not compute in the student's GPA. The "X" may be assigned only for courses pre-established as eligible for this treatment. Changes from the "X" to the final grade must be submitted on change-of-grade cards; the regular grade marked on a grade sheet for an "X"-eligible course will process to that term's enrollment only.

**The "EQ" grade:** The "EQ" grade is reserved for graduate students enrolled in research and thesis (5994), or research and dissertation (7994). The awarding of this grade shows that the enrollment has been reviewed and the credits are to be sent to the grade report system. Failure to assign an "EQ" grade will result in the computation of the credits as failing.

**The "NR" grade (Not Reported):** The "NR" (not reported) grade is automatically entered when an instructor fails to award a grade to a student. The "NR" grade computes as an "F."

**The "W" grade (Course Withdrawn):** The "W" (withdrawn) grade is given to an undergraduate or graduate student who has applied the course withdrawal policy to a course. The "W" grade is automatically awarded based on the course option of "W." A regular grade cannot be awarded if a student has applied the withdrawal policy or "W" option to the course.

**Mid-term grade reports:** Mid-term grade reports are issued for first-term undergraduates and first semester transfer students for the purpose of informing them about their progress early in their first academic year. Courses that are oriented toward freshmen should be designed to include at least one substantial graded assignment in time for the mid-term grade report.

**Projected grades for the graduating students, spring term:** Projected grades for graduating students—all levels—must be submitted by the published tentative grade entry deadline in the spring semester. All students are completed for spring term based on the projected (tentative) grades received. Failure to submit tentative grades results in the student's non-completion and non-receipt of diploma at the college or department or school ceremony. Entry of tentative grades follows the same process as the end of term entry via Hokie SPA.

## **9.6 Course Grading**

The instructor of record has sole responsibility for assigning final course grades and may not delegate the task to other colleagues or teaching assistants. Department heads, chairs, or school directors may ask instructors in their department or school to explain unusual profiles of grades or schemes of evaluation.

Faculty are expected to adhere to principles of professionalism, fairness, and clear communication when assigning grades. This includes consistent treatment of all students in the class; clear criteria—communicated directly to the class—about the basis on which course work is evaluated and grades are assigned; timely return of graded work to the student; sufficient feedback through the grading process for the student to improve performance on future assignments; and attention to fair and reasonable measures of course content and student performance.

During the term (i.e., before final grades are assigned), the grading process is not only a record of evaluation for work completed, it is also an important device for providing information to the student about potential work improvements in the future. Grading is a teaching tool that provides specific feedback to students. Faculty should keep this in mind when designing assignments and course work.

Students have the right to see their grades for a course and to lodge a grade appeal if they believe a grade was assigned unfairly. (See chapter nine of this handbook “Undergraduate Student Appeals” and “Graduate Student Appeals.”)

The U.S. Department of Education stipulates that posting of grades using even a portion of the student identification number, is considered a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA protects the confidentiality of educational records and prohibits distribution of that record unless with the student’s written consent. Faculty may not post any grades as a class listing using any portion of the student identification number, either via paper or electronically (This policy applies whether the student identification is the Social Security number or a generated identification number).

### **9.6.1 Syllabus and Performance Expectation**

Each semester on the first day of classes, faculty are expected to provide students with a [course syllabus](#) that includes course objectives, topical outlines, expected performance for which grades will be assigned, and the instructor’s attendance policy, if any. The syllabus should also include a statement on the honor system and its application to the course, reference to accommodations for students with disabilities, and information regarding office hours and how the instructor can be reached directly or through the departmental or school office during normal working hours. Further information regarding the undergraduate honor system and the graduate honor system is located below. Further information regarding accommodations for students with disabilities is available on the [Services for Students with Disabilities website](#).

An explicit statement concerning prerequisites for the course must be included on the course syllabus or assignment sheet. The instructor should call attention to the prerequisites during the first week of classes. Before the official drop-add deadline, the instructor may require specific students without prerequisites to drop the course. The student who is granted permission to enroll without prerequisites should be informed that course expectations and grading practices are the same for all students regardless of whether prerequisites were satisfied or waived.

The syllabus is a very important document because it provides explicit information to the student about course content, schedule, grading scale, and expectations of the instructor. The instructor should design the syllabus as a useful means for setting the tone of the course. Substantial changes in the syllabus constitute modifications in the structure or content of the course, which should be communicated clearly and in writing to students in a revised syllabus. These might include changes in the grading scale, significant departures from the schedule, or modifications of assignments.

All written work, with the exceptions noted below, should be given at such time that it may be graded and then returned during a regularly scheduled class meeting. To the extent feasible, instructors should not schedule major assignments or tests for the last three calendar days of scheduled classes or reading day. Students should be allowed time to prepare for their final exams and benefit from feedback on material relevant to exams.

**Common exceptions include:** due dates for term papers and project reports may be set at the instructor's discretion, if the student will not be held responsible for the subject matter therein on the final examination; if a lab course or other course does not warrant a final examination during the exam period, but if the department or school and/or instructor requires that there be a final examination, the exam should be given during the last regularly scheduled laboratory or class period; final examinations for master's and doctoral candidates, if approved by the vice president and dean for graduate education.

### **9.6.2 Class Attendance**

Class meetings are an integral part of most courses and the central component of many. Therefore, both faculty and students are expected to meet at all regularly scheduled times, except for cancellations announced on a university-wide basis by appropriate authority.

If a faculty member cannot meet a class, departmental or school procedures should be followed so that appropriate measures are taken to provide for the missed class.

If a student cannot attend a class, they may notify their instructor(s) directly or contact the Office of the Dean of Students, whose staff can provide advocacy through its absence verification process. The Office of the Dean of Students considers absence verification for any of the following reasons: illness or death of a family member or friend; off-campus medical appointments or hospital admission; court subpoenas; military orders; and observances of religious, cultural, ethnic, meaning-making, or faith-based beliefs.

Staff members send an absence verification notice to the college dean, who then forwards the verification to the instructor(s). If upon a good faith evaluation an instructor believes that accommodating an absence negatively affects the course of study, students can contact the Office of the Dean of Students for continued advocacy and guidance. Students are responsible for making arrangements with the instructor as soon as possible to complete any work missed due to absence. If this work differs from the original exam or assignment, it must be appropriately related to course objectives and no more difficult than the original.

Faculty determine their attendance policy, including whether they will accommodate absences and how they will do so. However, in accordance with the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, faculty are encouraged to accommodate students when the observance of religious, cultural, ethnic, meaning-making, or faith-based beliefs conflict with academic requirements. Students who choose to request an excused absence directly from their instructor(s) due to a religious observance should do so during the first two weeks of classes or as soon as they become aware of the need for an accommodation.

[Policy 5600, "Authorized Closings,"](#) defines the process followed with the university is affected by inclement weather, natural disasters, emergencies, and other conditions that may cause operations to be suspended or curtailed. University employees should consult [Policy 4305, "Authorized Closings Leave and Compensation Policy."](#) During Authorized Closings," for specific expectations in the event of a closure and information about supervisor/employee responsibilities, leave usage, and compensation.

### **9.6.3 Final Examinations**

Instructors must adopt an appropriate means for evaluating and measuring student performance relative to the course objectives. A final examination schedule is displayed on Hokie SPA in the timetable of classes and the student registration module for each academic term and final exams,

if used, must follow this schedule unless the dean of the college has granted special permission. The method of evaluation must be made known to students in the course syllabus at the beginning of the term (see this chapter “Syllabus and Performance Expectations”). Faculty members will make available to students any final graded material at least through the following academic term. Faculty members are required by the Virginia Public Records Act, 42.1-82, et seq. of the Code of Virginia to retain all work completed by students for grades in a course (includes, but is not limited to: exams, quizzes, tests, and term papers) for one full year after the end of the semester.

A student with conflicting examinations or with three or more examinations within 23 hours may reschedule an examination with permission of the student’s college dean at least ten days before the beginning of the examination period and by arrangement with the appropriate instructor.

A re-examination in one course, in which the final grade is C-or below, may be authorized when the student was enrolled in the course during the senior year final term and a satisfactory re-examination in the course would qualify the student for graduation. A re-examination request must be made, and the exam must be completed by the student as soon as possible, but no later than one academic term after the original examination in the course. Re-examination approval by the instructor, the student’s department head, chair, or school director and the student’s college dean is required, with consideration given to class performance and completion of assigned work.

#### **9.6.4 Undergraduate Student Grade Appeals**

The university provides a process for student appeal of a grade. If a student feels that a grade was calculated incorrectly or was assigned in a prejudiced or capricious manner, the student must first discuss the matter with the instructor. If discussion between the instructor and the student does not resolve the issue, the student then has the option of requesting a formal appeal of the grade to the department head, chair, or school director who examines the student’s allegation, discusses the matter with the instructor, and makes every effort to resolve the matter at the department or school level. In the unusual circumstance that resolution does not occur at the departmental or school or divisional level, the student may appeal to the instructor’s college dean. The dean reconciles the matter by whatever mechanism is most appropriate for that college and that case.

The decision of the college dean is final in undergraduate appeals.

The student must make a grade appeal as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the next academic term of the regular academic year (i.e., fall or spring).

#### **9.6.5 Graduate Student Grade Appeals**

Graduate education is a complex activity involving a high order of student-faculty interaction and collegial relationships.

It follows that the evaluation of the graduate student’s progress is, and must be, dependent in large part on the judgment of the graduate student’s major professor, augmented by the collective judgment of the members of their assigned committees. The university, through the agency of the graduate school, defines minimal entrance standards and prescribes general rules governing eligibility for continuation. But the crucial agency in student evaluation is the department or school in which the student’s work is centered, and the crucial evaluator is the faculty advisor.

It is important, therefore, that each graduate student be fully informed, not only of the university’s expectations, but of the department or school’s expectations as well. Each department or school

shall prepare, in outline form, a statement for each of its graduate degrees. The statement should cover course requirements, the nature and timing of oral and written examinations, and the evaluation that is given to the thesis. A copy of each departmental or school statement should be on file in the graduate school and made available to each student at the time of matriculation.

Most disputes over evidence of unsatisfactory progress are informally discussed and reconciled at the departmental or school level. Discussions of this kind occur among the student, the major professor, and the other members of the advisory committee. Nonetheless, from time-to-time serious questions arise regarding both the status of a graduate student (whether in a given course or as a candidate for the degree) and the basis of the evaluation that placed the student's status in jeopardy. On these occasions it is important that the university provides full opportunity for the student's grievance to be reviewed in a judicious manner.

The procedures for a formal graduate student appeal are described in the Graduate Catalog or may be obtained from the graduate school.

### **9.6.6 Student Academic Complaints**

Virginia Tech seeks to create a productive learning environment for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The Statement of Principles of Ethical Behavior calls for faculty to “foster honest academic conduct and to assure that our evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit.” Thus, when an undergraduate, graduate, or professional student believes they have suffered negative consequences due to an unfair or capricious decision related to academic policy, the student should be empowered to raise concerns and to seek appropriate resolution.

A student who believes an academic decision violates university academic policies and procedures may file a complaint with the appropriate department head, chair, or school director. Academic decisions do not include decisions regarding admission to the university, scholarship or financial aid awards, undergraduate honor system, graduate, veterinary medicine or school of medicine honor codes, or any grading decision or allegations of professional misconduct unrelated to a student's academic standing or performance.

The student academic complaint process is found in [Policy 6125, “Administrative Policy Governing Student Academic Complaints.”](#)

### **9.6.7 Change of Grade**

A change in grade is authorized only under unusual circumstances. Faculty submit a change of grade via Hokie SPA. The change of grade process requires the instructor's signature and the electronic approval of the department head, chair, or school director and dean for all grade changes—including removal of “I” grades. Grade change requests should carry a statement regarding the circumstances necessitating the change, which includes a description of the circumstances for an original award of an “I” grade. It is improper to permit a student to improve a grade by doing extra work unless all students in the class are given the same opportunity.

### **9.6.8 Final Grade Reports**

Final grades are reported via Hokie SPA. Two methods of entry are available—direct entry or upload from an external data file. Grades must be submitted within 48 hours of the last final examination on the published schedule. Student grade reports are generated from these submissions and displayed via Hokie SPA.

Faculty may not post grades, either via paper or electronically, using even a portion of the student identification number. Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), using a portion of the student identification number in conjunction with the course grade is not allowed without the written permission of the student. Faculty may wish to remind students that grades are available via Hokie SPA within 48 hours of the end of the term.

## **9.7 Faculty Instruction-Related Responsibilities**

### **9.7.1 Office Hours**

As a part of their teaching responsibilities, faculty members are expected to provide several regularly scheduled office hours each week for consultation with students. These hours should be reasonably spaced over the week at times mutually convenient to the instructor and students. Although a specific number of office hours is not stated in university policy, faculty members should ensure that they are readily available, both through office hours and by message at other times during the normal workweek. Information about office hours and how to contact the faculty member through the department or school office should be included on the course syllabus.

The instructor should encourage students in need of counsel to seek clarification about their work. Those in need of non-academic or personal counseling outside the purview of the faculty members' professional capabilities may be referred to the Cook Counseling Center.

### **9.7.2 Tutoring**

Faculty members and graduate teaching assistants do not accept fees for tutoring students enrolled in their classes, either on a group or single-student basis. They are free to tutor for payment otherwise under university consulting policies.

### **9.7.3 Students with Disabilities**

The university, as a federal aid recipient and state agency, is required to provide opportunities and reasonable accommodation to all identified students with disabilities. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Virginians with Disabilities Act, and [Policy 4075, "University Accommodations of Persons with Disabilities,"](#) provide guidelines and requirements for colleges and universities in providing academic assistance. Accommodation means more than the removal of architectural barriers and the provision of auxiliary services such as note takers, readers, and interpreters for the deaf. It means reasonable accommodation must be made in the instructional process to ensure full educational opportunity. For faculty, this means that teaching strategies and methods, including web page design and distance learning, as well as instructional policies, must be sensitive to the laws and the needs of students with disabilities and responsive to the university's legal obligations.

Students with disabilities may self-identify and may qualify for accommodations through Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Students must present medical or extensive psychoeducational documentation of physical, medical, psychological, or learning disabilities to SSD. Accommodations for students with disabilities are established by the SSD, in accordance with medical and professional information in the student's record, legal precedent, and national standards for services for students with disabilities. Faculty are urged to include a syllabus statement that encourages the student with a disability to disclose their need for accommodation to the professor as early in the semester as possible. Examples of inclusive disability syllabi statements are found on the [Services for Students with Disabilities page](#). Contact SSD for more information regarding accommodation and services.



## **9.8 The Virginia Tech Honor Code Pledge**

The Virginia Tech honor code pledge for assignments is as follows: “On my honor as a Virginia Tech student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

The pledge is to be written out on all graded assignments at the university and signed by undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The honor pledge represents both an expression of the student’s support of the honor code and an unambiguous acknowledgment that the student has, on the assignment in question, abided by the obligation that the honor code entails. In the absence of a written honor pledge, the honor code still applies to an assignment.

### **9.8.1 The Undergraduate Honor System**

The undergraduate honor code defines the expected standards of conduct in undergraduate academic affairs. The honor code cultivates a culture of academic honesty and integrity on campus. It embodies a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty that is central to the very nature of the university and represents the highest possible expression of shared values among the members of the university community. [Policy 6000, “Undergraduate Honor Code”](#), provides the framework for honor code maintenance, revisions, and procedures for resolution for alleged academic misconduct cases.

The fundamental beliefs and ideals underlying the honor code are: trust in a person is a positive force in making that person worthy of trust; every student has the right to an academic environment free from the injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty; and the honesty and integrity of all members of the university community contribute to its academic and intellectual vitality.

Details of the undergraduate honor code are available on the [Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity website](#).

#### **9.8.1.1 Faculty Participation in the Undergraduate Honor System**

The support of faculty is essential to cultivating a culture of academic integrity. Faculty members are encouraged to support the undergraduate honor system and are expected to abide by the procedures designed for the effective implementation of the undergraduate honor code.

Faculty are expected to adhere to policy pertaining to the reporting and adjudication of violations of the honor code. Initiating formal procedures when academic misconduct is suspected is a necessary and obligatory component of a faculty member’s duties. Any suspected violations of the honor code should be reported promptly, in writing, to the director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity. Forms of this purpose are available from all department or school offices, the undergraduate honor system office, and the [Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity website](#). A faculty member involved in a case is also expected to cooperate with undergraduate honor system personnel, attend hearing panels, faculty-student resolution meetings, and to maintain confidentiality.

In addition, the undergraduate honor system offers the following guidelines to faculty:

Faculty are encouraged to describe the prohibited behavior and the consequences of such activity to students, as well as to openly discuss academic integrity with students in their courses early and throughout the semester.

When an alleged violation is detected, the suspected student(s)’ paper should not be collected until the test is completed. However, any evidence that would be necessary in an investigation

should be collected immediately. The test should be graded without prejudice and the alleged violation should be reported to the undergraduate honor system. Please provide the original assignment in question in the submission of evidence. Grades should not be adjusted in a course to compensate for suspected dishonesty.

If a professor suspects that a student or students are cheating, it is permissible to speak with the suspected student(s)—after the test or other work has been completed—and indicate these suspicions. However, it is not permissible to penalize or berate the student(s) or to take any other action that might affect the student(s).

Faculty members are not required to proctor quizzes, tests, and examinations. Faculty are expected to personally administer the examination and to remain within reasonable proximity of the examination room to answer questions that may be raised by the students. However, it is not a compromise of the undergraduate honor system to stay in the room or visit frequently, when a test is being given. In fact, precautionary measures in the spirit of reducing the opportunity for academic misconduct are advisable, especially in large classes. Seats should be spaced in examination rooms whenever possible. Alternate test forms may be used. In rare cases, such extreme measures as requiring ID when a test is handed in may be necessary to prevent organized “paid substitutes” from taking tests for other students.

Faculty are encouraged to speak with the director of the Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity to obtain information designed to prevent academic misconduct.

The faculty, along with the students and other university personnel, share the responsibility of cultivating a culture of academic integrity and honesty through upholding the undergraduate honor code.

#### **9.8.1.2 Undergraduate Honor Code Statement in Course Syllabi**

All undergraduate course syllabi shall contain a section that states and refers students to the honor code procedures available on the [Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity website](#). The minimum required statement is, “As a Hokie I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.” Additional information about the expectation of academic integrity in a particular course may be appropriate.

Each student who enrolls at Virginia Tech is responsible for abiding by the honor code. A student who has doubt about how the honor code applies to any graded assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the university community from the requirements and expectations of the honor code. For additional information, please see Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity website.

#### **9.8.1.3 Undergraduate Honor Code Definitions of Academic Misconduct**

Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute a violation of the undergraduate honor code. The list is not, however, exclusive of other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute academic misconduct.

**Cheating** includes intentionally using unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids, or other devices or materials in any academic exercise, or attempts thereof.

**Plagiarism** includes the copying of the language, structure, programming, computer code, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off the same as one's own original work or attempts thereof.

**Falsification** includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any circumstances relevant to one's academic work or attempts thereof.

**Fabrication** includes making up data and results, and recording or reporting them, or submitting fabricated documents, or attempts thereof.

**Multiple submission** includes the submission for credit—without authorization of the instructor receiving the work—of substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) previously submitted for credit at any academic institution or attempts thereof.

**Complicity** includes intentionally helping another to engage in an act of academic misconduct or attempts thereof. Violation of university, college, departmental, school, or faculty rules includes the violation of any course, departmental, school, college, or university rule relating to academic matters that may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s).

#### **9.8.1.4 Undergraduate Honor Code Sanctions**

Instances of academic misconduct represent behavior of an especially serious nature. Sanctions assigned for academic misconduct are responses to student behavior that will often have an impact on a student's course grade. Sanctions assigned in instances of academic misconduct should convey the message that the behavior serves as a destructive force within the academic community. However, a wide range of sanctions can be employed in order to strike an appropriate balance between sending a message of accountability and enhancing a student's moral and cognitive development.

The undergraduate honor system is empowered with assigning and implementing sanctions for academic misconduct. A faculty member may recommend sanctions for academic misconduct to the undergraduate honor system. Most cases of academic misconduct should result in an F\* as the student's final course grade. An F\* sanction indicates that a student failed the course due to an honor code violation. However, a faculty member may recommend more severe or less severe penalties to the undergraduate honor system if the circumstances warrant. Examples of other sanctions that may be assigned include lowered final course grade, reduction of points on an individual assignment, zero on the assignment, and completion of the academic integrity education program. With the approval of an honor system hearing panel, the sanctions of suspension and expulsion may also be assigned. Faculty are strongly encouraged to consult the undergraduate honor system prior to making recommendations on the appropriate sanction.

##### **9.8.1.4.1 Grade Adjustments for Suspected Academic Misconduct**

Grades may not be adjusted in a course to compensate for suspected academic misconduct.

When an alleged violation of the undergraduate code occurs, the incident should be reported to the honor system by submission of a violation report form. Sanctions for academic misconduct will be assigned through the Undergraduate Honor System.

The faculty, along with the students and other university personnel, share the responsibility for cultivating a culture of academic integrity and honesty through upholding the undergraduate honor code.

## **9.8.2 Graduate and Professional Student Honor Systems**

### **9.8.2.1 Graduate School Honor System**

Detailed information concerning the graduate honor system applicable to all graduate students is found in the graduate honor system constitution, published in the Graduate Catalog. The graduate honor system constitution describes the rights and responsibilities of students as well as faculty with regard to the honor code.

### **9.8.2.2 Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine**

The honor system for students in the College of Veterinary Medicine is described in the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine student honor code.

### **9.8.2.3 Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine**

The honor code for students in the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) is described in the VTCSOM Student Handbook.

## **9.9 Classroom Conduct**

Maintaining a good learning environment in the classroom is an important part of a faculty member's responsibility as a teacher. The teacher should endeavor to create a classroom atmosphere that is comfortable and welcoming of all students, including women and members of minority groups. Disruptive classroom conduct on the part of some students may be distracting, annoying, or intimidating to other students and should not be tolerated by the teacher.

As much as possible, the teacher should endeavor to create a classroom environment in which there is active participation on the part of most of the students, rather than the domination of the class by a few individual students. This may require different teaching strategies such as the use of small groups or teams, as well as different approaches to the structure of classroom presentations. Assistance for faculty who are trying to improve the learning environment of the classroom is available through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Faculty have the prerogative of deciding the classroom conduct and the appropriate dress of their students as long as these actions do not infringe upon the students' rights as guaranteed in principles underlying the section in the Student Code of Conduct. It is the faculty member's obligation to ensure that the classes following find a clean and orderly space.

## **9.10 Teaching Evaluations**

Good teaching evaluation processes are essential for maintaining the quality of academic programs, for reviewing the job performance of faculty members with respect to the instructional mission of the university, and for designing effective faculty development initiatives. All of the colleges have processes of teaching evaluation, which are used in promotion and tenure decisions and in annual performance evaluations.

### **9.10.1 Student Evaluation of Courses and Faculty**

The university expectation is that all faculty members will be evaluated in all courses taught each year. More information about this matter is available from departmental or school offices and from the academic deans. Student evaluation of courses and instructors is an integral component of a good teaching program. While specific procedures vary across the colleges, in general, committees in each college are responsible for designing appropriate evaluation procedures and for receiving such evaluations. Faculty members should ensure that their college's procedures for

conducting student teaching evaluations are followed in a way that is absolutely free of intimidation or influence by the teacher's presence.

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) system was developed to provide a centrally supported, university-wide method for collecting student feedback regarding courses and instruction. The SPOT questionnaire is designed for use across all university departments and schools; as such, it focuses on issues with broad pedagogical significance. It is not intended to stand-alone in providing evidence regarding teaching effectiveness. Rather, it provides one form of information regarding the quality of courses and instruction that may be integrated and interpreted with other forms—such as instructor-developed course-specific questionnaires, peer observation of teaching, and instructor self-assessment—for purposes of instructional development and/or evaluation.

### **9.10.2 Peer Evaluation of Courses and Faculty**

Good teaching evaluation includes more than the student perception of instruction. The university expectation is that in-depth peer evaluation of teaching will be conducted periodically for all faculty members and at least twice during the probationary period for tenure-track faculty.

Colleges, departments, schools, and individuals wishing assistance in devising evaluation forms may consult the [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#), where a variety of such forms are available. Faculty members may find such evaluations helpful in revealing information that leads to improvement of classroom presentation, evaluation of students, and student response to their classes.

## **9.11 Student Record Policy**

In response to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a statement of policy on the maintenance and disclosure of student records was adopted by the university. This policy protects the privacy of student records; the specific policy document is available from the [university registrar's Student Privacy \(FERPA\) page](#).

### **9.11.1 Academic Records**

Names of current and former students, that are not marked suppressed or confidential, may be selected and released to non-university entities only on the basis of class level (e.g., freshman, senior), major, or place of residence.

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia § 23.1-405, student and former student addresses (both physical and VT email) and phone numbers should not be released to non-university entities regardless if they are marked suppressed or confidential or not.

The protection of academic records, which exist in enrollment management and in the college and departmental or school files, is covered by this policy. This includes the student's right to review these records.

Responses to telephone inquiries are limited to the following information: whether the student is currently enrolled; dates of enrollment; degree(s) earned if any, date, major, and honors received; address and telephone number. The Office of the University Registrar must provide official certification of these items. Special note: no information, including directory information, may be released if a student has marked all or part of their record suppressed or confidential.

Grade reports may not be released to parents, guardians, or any other person without prior written approval from the student. Students may not have access to financial aid information about their parents or guardians without written approval from the parent or guardian.

The university may withhold transcripts, certificates, registration materials, or any other information about a student's record if financial obligations are unmet. The university also reserves the privilege of withholding materials if violations of university regulations have not been cleared.

### **9.11.2 Lecture Recording**

Lecture recordings should be handled in a manner that ensures any and all student's personally identifiable information isn't released outside of FERPA requirements. The following guidelines should be considered when using lecture recording:

- Faculty should not upload to a public site any recording of a class session where the students are in any way the focus in the recording, either by name or by image.
- Faculty who wish to record lectures for use in later semesters may do so by recording the course in such a way that the students' identity is never revealed.
- Recordings that include student names (such as on zoom) or in which a student is presenting their work may be shared ONLY through Canvas and ONLY with the section of the course in which the student(s) are enrolled.

### **9.12 Undergraduate Student Advising**

Undergraduate advising at Virginia Tech is a collaborative process between student and advisor, leading to the exchange of information that encourages the individual student to make responsible academic and career decisions. The university is committed to effective advising by recognizing and supporting the needs of both students and advisors. Each undergraduate student is provided information and assistance to aid the student in making academic and career decisions. Each advisor is provided with the necessary tools to respond to student needs and the opportunity to be recognized for exemplary advising.

**Statement of university responsibility.** The university shares responsibility for successful advising. Senior leaders will: review the advising process to assess the impact of recommendations implemented; provide information for students, advisors, parents, and other constituents that clearly explain responsibilities and expectations related to advising; make information available about advising for all new faculty and appropriate staff; collect and disseminate information that contributes to effective advising; assist students in clarification of academic and long term goals; support initiatives that enhance the use of technology in advising; support Web-based interactive advising support systems for students, advisors, parents, and other constituents; and support a Virginia Tech plan that effectively assesses, recognizes, and rewards advising in the annual professional evaluation.

**Statement of student responsibility.** The student shares responsibility for developing an advising partnership with the advisor. Over time, this partnership results in increased responsibility for the student.

The student will: communicate goals, needs, wants, and concerns to the advisor in a respectful and sincere manner; keep abreast of their own academic progress and requirements related to their academic programs; make, keep, and be prepared for appointments with the advisor; inform the advisor of changes in plans and/or circumstances that might impact academic performance;

know departmental or school procedures regarding changing advisors; and bring concerns regarding quality of advising to the attention of the advisor.

**Statement of advisor responsibility.** The advisor shares responsibility for developing an advising partnership with undergraduate students. The advisor will: communicate with students and delivering individualized and accurate information in a professional and sincere manner; be informed of and provide accurate information about current academic policies and procedures; keep appointments and be available for assistance; provide appropriate referrals, contacts, and information; do appropriate follow-up with students; and seek out and take advantage of opportunities for professional development.

### **9.13 Identifying and Referring the Distressed Student**

The college years can be stressful for students. In the contemporary climate of competition and pressure, some students adequately cope with these stresses, but others find that stress becomes unmanageable and interferes with learning. In some cases, these students may even disrupt the learning of others.

**Identifying the distressed student.** Many students initially seek assistance from faculty. A student in distress may display: excessive procrastination and very poorly prepared work, especially if inconsistent with previous work; infrequent class attendance with little or no work completed; dependency (e.g., the student who hangs around or makes excessive appointments during office hours); listlessness, lack of energy, or frequently falling asleep in class; marked changes in personal hygiene; impaired speech and disjointed thoughts; repeated requests for special consideration; threats to others; expressed suicidal thoughts; excessive weight gain or loss; behavior that regularly interferes with effective class management; frequent or high levels of irritable, unruly, abrasive, or aggressive behavior; inability to make decisions despite repeated efforts to clarify or encourage; bizarre behavior that is obviously inappropriate for the situation; or may appear overly nervous, tense, or tearful.

**Guidelines for interacting with a distressed student.** Talk to the student in private. Express concern and be as specific as possible in stating your observations and reasons for concern. Listen carefully and repeat the essence of what the student has told you so that your attempts to understand are communicated. Avoid criticizing or sounding judgmental. Consider the Cook Counseling Center as a resource and discuss referral with the student. If the student resists referral and you remain uncomfortable with the situation, contact the Cook Counseling Center or the Office of the Dean of Students to discuss your concern.

**Referring a distressed student to Cook Counseling Center.** Suggest that the distressed student call or come in to make an appointment. Give him or her the Cook Counseling Center's phone number (540- 231-6557) and location (240 McComas Hall). It is usually more effective to assist the student by calling for an appointment with the student present. When you reach the center's receptionist, identify yourself as a faculty member and ask for an appointment for the student. The student's name and Tech ID number are required for the appointment. Write down the appointment time, date, and name of the counselor for the student. If you feel the situation is an emergency or urgent enough to require immediate attention, tell the receptionist that the student needs to see a counselor immediately. It may be necessary for you to walk the student to the center. If you are concerned about the student, but unsure about the appropriateness of a referral, call the center for a consultation.

**Receiving the assistance of the Office of the Dean of Students.** The dean of students offers several guides and videos that may be helpful in identifying and interacting with the distressed student.

Responding to Students in Distress, which is available online or a print copy may be requested by calling the Office of the Dean of Students at 540-231-3787 or by sending an email request to [dean.students@vt.edu](mailto:dean.students@vt.edu).

Assisting Students: A Faculty and Staff Resource Guide may be obtained by calling the Office of the Dean of Students at 540-231-3787, or by sending an email request to [dean.students@vt.edu](mailto:dean.students@vt.edu). The listing is available in two formats—a re-positional sticker, or a 4x6-inch card that includes contact information for student affairs departments able to assist with distressed students.

The Office of Dean of Students partners with faculty and staff members to support students for whom there may be concern. Concerns may be shared by phone at 540-231-3787, email [dean.students@vt.edu](mailto:dean.students@vt.edu), or face-to-face contact with staff in the Dean of Students Office. After regular business hours, contact Virginia Tech Police at 540-231-6411 for connection to the dean of students' on- call staff member.

The Office of the Dean of Students also offers an additional tool for faculty members to use in sharing concerns about a student. This online reporting system should not be used for emergencies. The Dean of Students Reporting System is available through the Hokie SPA menu. This system closely parallels the academic advising system already used by faculty. As always, matters needing immediate attention should be directed to the Virginia Tech Police at 540-231-6411.



## CHAPTER TEN - RESEARCH, CREATIVE AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

### 10.0 Policies for Research, Creative and Scholarly Activities

[Consult the Office of Research and Innovation](#). Research at the university is classified as departmental research, core research, and/or sponsored research. Individual research projects may receive funds under one or more of these categories, as described below.

#### 10.1 Principal Investigator Guidelines

A principal investigator (PI) bears responsibility for the intellectual leadership of a project. The PI accepts overall responsibility for directing the research, the financial oversight of the award's funding, as well as compliance with sponsor terms and all relevant federal, state, and university regulations, policies, and procedures. Information and PI guidelines are maintained by the Office of Research and Innovation and can be found on the [Sponsored Research \(OSP\) Principal Investigator Resources page](#).

#### 10.2 Research Classifications

##### 10.2.1 Departmental Research

Research supported by departmental operating funds and/or through adjustment of teaching responsibilities is called departmental research. In this category, faculty are free to pursue research to enrich their teaching, scholarship, and greater understanding of their discipline.

##### 10.2.2 Core Research

Core research focuses primarily on the needs of Virginia and is funded by state and federal appropriations through the instructional division and Virginia Cooperative Extension /Agricultural Experiment Station. There are six core research sub-programs:

- agriculture and forestry research
- coal and energy research
- environmental and water resources research
- industrial and economic development research
- veterinary medical research, and
- supporting research

Faculty, who believe their research relates directly to one or more of the sub-programs and is applicable to problems or concerns of the commonwealth, should contact their department head or chair about procedures for securing core research support.

##### 10.2.3 Sponsored Research

Sponsored research is supported through awards funded by external sponsors resulting from proposals submitted, on a project-by-project basis, by university faculty. Such proposals are submitted to state and federal agencies, corporations, and private foundations. Through sponsored research, faculty obtain the resources needed to conduct expanded research programs and may receive additional months of salary support. Research time is charged when the work activity and work reported are during the same period.

Sponsored awards add stature to the recipient and the university; thus, faculty members are encouraged to seek such support. Restrictions for sponsored research include that the research must not constitute undue competition with commercial testing and research laboratories or with private consultants, and that it is compatible with the primary mission of the university. Questions

about the appropriateness of a specific research project should be directed to the department head or chair, dean's office, or to the Office of Research and Innovation.

### **10.3 Preparation of Proposals for Sponsored Projects**

The Office of Research and Innovation assists faculty in obtaining research sponsorship. Policies, procedures, and pre-award contacts are available on the [Office of Sponsored Programs \(OSP\) website](#). Faculty are encouraged to explore research sponsorships by viewing funding opportunities on the Office of Research and Innovation website. Office of Research and Innovation personnel consult with faculty regarding research support and help faculty locate programs and individuals at government agencies, industry, and private foundations.

Most funding agencies have their own scientific and technical priorities and funding restrictions. Therefore prior to writing a formal proposal, faculty are encouraged to review their proposal concept with the appropriate person at the agency to which the proposal will be submitted. Faculty may wish to discuss proposal preparation with the appropriate member of their college dean's staff. Before final budget preparation, an OSP official must review the proposed budget. The OSP official provides information and guidance about university policies for cost sharing, budgetary matters, confidentiality, publication, and intellectual property undertakings.

Faculty should be aware that some agencies limit the number of proposals, frequency of institutional proposal submission or the total dollar amount of proposals that can be submitted by an institution in response to a research sponsor's solicitation. Some sponsors also limit the number of active awards for a given program by institution. Additional guidance for these solicitations or program notices are available on the [Research and Innovation Limited Submissions webpage](#).

The required process for submitting a sponsored project proposal is on the OSP webpage, [Procedure 20002, Proposal Submission](#). Each proposal requires considerable processing. Deadlines for submitting proposals to OSP in advance of agency deadlines are also available on the OSP website.

### **10.4 Laboratory Services and Facilities**

Several colleges and departments maintain shops and facilities for design, fabrication, maintenance, and repair of specialized equipment. The Office of Research and Innovation can assist faculty in locating an appropriate facility.

[Environmental Health and Safety \(EHS\)](#) must be consulted before any laboratory is established in a university facility. The EHS staff will determine if the proposed laboratory meets all necessary facility and laboratory requirements. The EHS staff ensures that all personnel who will be working in the laboratory are familiar with the various university policies, procedures, and publications that cover laboratory operations. These may include chemical hygiene plans, laboratory safety manuals, safe handling, use, and disposal of Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) or Biosafety 3 (BSL-3) agents, or when applicable, lab licensing and radiation safety manuals approved by the Radiation Safety Committee.

Research involving biohazardous agents, including recombinant and/or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, and select agents and toxins (SATs) is governed by regulations established (1) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] and (2) the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDAAPHIS). Acquisition and use of biohazardous

agents cannot occur without prior notification and review by the university's designated responsible official (the biosafety officer in EHS), and review and approval of proposed uses of those materials by the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). Inspection and authorization by CDC and USDA APHIS are required for labs where biohazardous agents are proposed to be stored and used.

Research and teaching animals may be housed and maintained in college herds or flocks, in departmental or researcher-maintained housing (also known as satellite areas) or is designated centralized animal vivaria managed by Animal Resources and Care Division (ARCD) personnel. Researchers who want to house animals in new areas or facilities not currently used for that purpose must request inspection by the Institutional [Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#) to ensure housing is consistent with applicable regulations and standards and receive approval of the space before animals are ordered and housed in the new facility/area.

### **10.5 Research Involving Human Subjects, Animal Subjects, and Biohazardous Agents**

The Virginia Tech division of [Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance \(SIRC\)](#) provides administrative support to the university's compliance committees responsible for reviewing and approving research involving humans, animals used in teaching and research, recombinant DNA, dual use research of concern, and biohazardous agents. SIRC ensures institutional compliance with applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidelines by providing training to researchers, staff, and students, and by performing post-approval monitoring of approved protocols. SIRC supports four compliance review committees with federally mandated membership composition including faculty peers and community members, that review each research protocol to ensure scientific quality, ethical treatment of research subjects (animal and human), and compliance with related federal and state research regulations.

#### **10.5.1 Research with Human Subjects**

The [Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) has general oversight responsibility for the university's compliance with its federal-wide assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the ethical principles established in the Belmont Report, and human subjects protection regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations title 45, part 46 (45 CFR 46) and 21 CFR 50. All research with human subjects, as defined in 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, conducted by Virginia Tech faculty, staff, or students, regardless of funding source (including non-funded research), must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before research is initiated and subjects are recruited. In accordance with federal law, the Virginia Tech IRB has the authority to approve, disapprove, or require modifications in protocols before approval is granted. For studies that the IRB deems to be greater than minimal risk, the investigator must seek continuing IRB review, at least annually, or as determined by the IRB. Continuing review materials must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before the study's expiration date. No changes may be made to an approved nonexempt protocol until an amendment application is approved by the IRB. Investigators must seek research determinations from the Human Research Protection Program for all proposed research projects, which fall into one of the following categories: Not human subjects research, exempt, expedited or full-board review. [Policy 13040, "Virginia Tech Human Subjects Research Policy,"](#) establishes requirements for research involving human participants. These requirements are intended to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects recruited to participate in research activities.

The [Privacy and Research Data Protections program \(PRDP\)](#) has oversight of privacy and confidentiality protections of research data in collaboration with Virginia Tech information security and related policy stakeholders. The PRDP collaborates with researchers, the IRB, University Libraries, and university IT resource owners on data use and storage opportunities to facilitate secure storage and use of personally identifiable information and protected health information. PRDP provides guidance to researchers regarding compliance with regulatory requirements such as HIPAA, GDPR, FERPA, PCI-DSS, and related state, federal, and international privacy laws.

### **10.5.2 Teaching and Research with Animals**

The [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#) has oversight responsibility for Virginia Tech's compliance with its approved animal welfare assurance on file in the National Institutes of Health Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, its approved research facility registration with USDA Agriculture, Animal, and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, the PHS principles for the use and care of vertebrate animals used in testing, research, and training, the federal Animal Welfare Act and animal welfare regulations, and accreditation by AAALAC International. All proposed research and teaching use of vertebrate animal species, regardless of funding source (including non-funded research), must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC before animals are acquired and activities initiated. In accordance with federal law, the Virginia Tech IACUC has the authority to approve, disapprove, or require modifications in protocols before approval is granted. No changes may be made to an approved protocol until a protocol amendment application is approved by the IACUC. Researchers and instructors must provide annual continuing review information and as requested. In accordance with federal regulations, protocols can only be approved for a three-year period, after which a renewal protocol must be submitted for review and approval by the IACUC. Per federal law, every six months the IACUC must inspect areas where animals are housed or used (e.g., labs where animals may be taken) and review the animal program. [Policy 13035, "Virginia Tech Animal Research Policy,"](#) establishes requirements governing the use of animals in research and training. These requirements are intended to safeguard and ensure the humane treatment of animals used in research and training.

#### **10.5.2.1 Animal Resources and Care Division (ARCD)**

The [Animal Resources and Care Division \(ARCD\)](#) within the Office of Research and Innovation has oversight responsibility for the provision of adequate veterinary care as defined in federal regulations and other standards (e.g., PHS Policy, the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching) that address the use of animals in research and teaching activities conducted under IACUC approved protocols. The Attending Veterinarian delegates the responsibilities for the daily provision of veterinary care, including emergency care provided on weekends, holidays, and after normal business hours, to trained and experienced ARCD clinical veterinarians and veterinarians employed by the Veterinary Teaching Hospital within the Virginia- Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. Delegated veterinarians use professional judgement to provide veterinary care that encompasses but is not limited to preventive medicine; disease surveillance, diagnosis, treatment, and control; surgical and perioperative care; appropriate use of anesthesia, analgesia, and euthanasia; and animal well-being. Delegated veterinarians are responsible for the management of clinical records and addressing animal health or welfare issues related to procedures conducted under IACUC approved protocols.

ARCD personnel manage the daily operations of multiple animal care facilities (a.k.a. vivaria) that house a variety of species utilized under IACUC approved protocols. ARCD personnel provide daily husbandry and care procedures in accordance with applicable regulatory, institutional, and accreditation standards.

### **10.5.3 Laboratory Research**

The [Institutional Biosafety Committee \(IBC\)](#) provides compliance review and oversight of research and instructional activities that involve the use of infectious agents, federally-designated select agents, recombinant and/or synthetic nucleic acids, gene editing systems, genetically modified organisms, genetically engineered organisms, transgenic organisms, gene transfer, gene therapy, biologically derived toxins, and the culturing and/or manipulation of human and/or non-human primate material, including cell lines from vendors. Oversight by the IBC is not limited to specific funding sources and includes non-funded research. In accordance with the NIH Guidelines, the Virginia Tech IBC has the authority to approve, disapprove, or require modifications in protocols before approval is granted. Protocols are approved for a period of three years, after which a renewal protocol must be submitted for review and approval by the IBC. No changes may be made to an approved protocol until an amendment application is approved by the IBC. The IBC coordinates its activities with Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), specifically the biosafety officer (who is also the designated responsible official for select agents and toxins), and other lab safety professionals. [Policy 13030, “Virginia Tech Recombinant DNA and Biohazard Research Property.”](#) establishes requirements for the safe, secure, and compliant use of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules and/or biohazardous materials. These requirements are intended to protect university personnel, the public, and the environment.

The Institutional Review Entity (IRE) provides guidance in identifying, as well as compliance review and oversight for, activities confirmed to be life sciences Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC) performed at Virginia Tech and/or performed by Virginia Tech employees. DURC is defined in the US government Institutional Life Sciences DURC Policy (USG Policy) as activities involving at least one of the agents and/or toxins listed in Section 2.1.1 of the USG Policy, and which produces, aims to produce, or can be reasonably anticipated to produce, one or more of the effects listed in Section 2.1.2 of the USG Policy. Any activities involving the use of one or more agents or toxins listed in the USG Policy must be submitted to the IRE for evaluation. As defined in the USG Policy, there are no exempt quantities of botulinum neurotoxin, and all use of the toxin needs to be evaluated by the IRE for DURC potential. The Institutional Biosafety Program (IBP) is the administrative office for the IRE. The Associate Vice President for Research and Innovation/director of SIRC is the Institutional Contact for dual use research.

### **10.6 Ownership and Control of Research Results**

The university asserts its right to the results of research funded wholly, or in part, with university resources. University ownership of intellectual properties is covered in [Policy 13000, “Policy on Intellectual Property.”](#) University ownership rights, as defined in the Policy on Intellectual Property, may extend to all permanent, visiting, or research faculty, staff, wage employees, and students.

The faculty principal investigator or project leader is expected to manage the university's ownership of research results and material (including all data) that best advance the standard routes of publication, presentations, and other usual means of dissemination of research results for that particular field. Creation of intellectual property (IP) must be disclosed to the university by submitting an IP disclosure form, which is available on the [Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties \(VTIP\) page](#) or by contacting the License team within the Office of Research and Innovation.

Invention Disclosures should be made as soon as possible after creation (i.e., before publication or other public discussion) to protect the potential value and utility of the IP.

As project leader, it is the responsibility of the faculty principal investigator to preserve the research material and results in the manner that is customary to the field. This includes all notebooks and files (independent of whether they are in analog or digital format), computer files, samples, specimens, prototypes, etc. germane to the veracity and validity of the research claims. Sponsored research projects may require additional document retention based on sponsor requirements or fulfillment of the project's data management plan, included in the original proposal. All research data, results, and related materials must be retained as required by state law and in accordance with the retention requirements of the Library of Virginia's state records management program. The faculty principal investigator is also responsible for complying with any additional applicable regulations regarding data retention for specific records.

Additional requirements concerning ownership and control of research data, results, and related records are set forth in [Policy 13015, "Ownership and Control of Research Results."](#)

### **10.7 Financial Conflicts of Interest Related to Sponsored Research**

Virginia Tech recognizes the value and necessity of engaging with outside entities to translate research into beneficial products. Transparency and appropriate management of these relationships promotes objectivity in research and safeguards the interests and reputation of Virginia Tech and its employees.

To ensure compliance with state law and federal regulations, and to provide consistent institutional policies and practices in relation to all research sponsors, investigators engaged in sponsored activities research must take training and disclose financial interests related to their institutional responsibilities as described in [Policy 13010, "Conflict of Interest."](#) The Research Conflict of Interest Program is responsible for assessing and implementing management strategies for investigator financial conflicts of interest. The program also administers the university's system for outside activity and financial interest disclosure.

Once an Investigator discloses a financial interest to the university, the Research Conflict of Interest program determines whether the financial interest could directly and significantly affect the design, conduct, or reporting research. If so, the situation represents a financial conflict of interest (FCOI) and the program must ensure that a plan to manage the financial interest is developed and implemented prior to the start of the research. The management plan is designed to mitigate the conflict, promote research objectivity, and promote academic and professional protection of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, respectively. If needed, the Management Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC), a standing committee of the university, will make recommendations to the Research Conflict of Interest program director regarding how the financial conflict of interest should be managed to ensure that sponsored research will be objective and free from bias to the extent possible.

There is a particular significance to financial conflict of interest processes when a faculty member has a financial interest in a small business that is pursuing SBIR/STTR funding in collaboration with Virginia Tech. Note that use of university resources on behalf of a small business is not permitted unless Virginia Tech is performing the scope of work authorized through the subaward from the small business to Virginia Tech and that subaward is fully executed before work begins. Only the documented subawarded work is authorized to be performed using Virginia Tech resources. University personnel cannot support the small business funding application

whatsoever, including developing a budget or proposal on behalf of the small business. The involvement of the university in such activities occurs only to the extent that Virginia Tech is an intended subawardee in the research, in which case typical involvement of Virginia Tech researchers and research administrators is permissible. University personnel cannot provide any pre- or post-award support to the small business or make arrangements/handle reimbursements for small business travel. Note that rights to intellectual property cannot generally be assigned to an entity other than Virginia Tech except as permitted pursuant to [Policy 13000, "Policy on Intellectual Property"](#). See chapter two of this handbook for additional information regarding disclosure and management of potential conflicts of interest or commitment.

### **10.8 Classified and Controlled Unclassified Research**

The U.S. government occasionally seeks the expertise of Virginia Tech faculty to engage in classified or controlled unclassified research. Faculty must realize that working in classified or controlled unclassified research requires that they relinquish opportunities to disseminate the knowledge gained in this effort without prior approval from the sponsor. However, the university does recognize that individual investigators may wish to work in areas that have classified or controlled unclassified aspects and/or cannot conduct the research in compliance with applicable federal statutes and executive orders without access to classified or controlled unclassified information. To accommodate this need, the university has a continuing compliance and security program administered by the Office of Export and Secure Research Compliance in accordance with government regulations. Virginia Tech policy and procedures for complying with U.S. export and sanctions laws in research and other university activities are set forth in [Policy 13045, "Export Control, Sanctions, and Research Security Compliance Policy."](#)

### **10.9 Special Circumstances for Theses and Dissertations**

The university may withhold the publication of theses and dissertations for up to one year for the purpose of obtaining a patent or for other proprietary reasons. To exercise this option for a thesis or dissertation, an electronic thesis/dissertation ([ETD](#)) approval form must be completed and signed by the thesis or dissertation author and by the advisor, with a request that the thesis or dissertation be withheld from public release.

In cases where theses or dissertations contain classified or controlled unclassified, including export-controlled information, students and faculty advisors will consult with the Office of Export and Secure Research Compliance in the Office of Research and Innovation as well as the Graduate School. Theses or dissertations containing classified or controlled unclassified information cannot be submitted to the Graduate School through the normal ETD process.

### **10.10 Publication of Research**

The final step to complete a research project is to share the knowledge gained with the professional/scientific community. Barring special circumstances (e.g., classified research, DURC), the university's expectation is that research results will be shared with the scientific community through peer-reviewed journals, books, reports, or other public mechanisms. Department heads or chairs can help determine how best to complete and publish the results of research projects. Consult [Policy 13000, "Policy on Intellectual Property"](#) for information on the university's nonexclusive license for scholarly articles.

### **10.11 Scholarly Integrity and Misconduct in Research**

As stated in [Policy 13020, "Policy on Misconduct in Research"](#) Virginia Tech endorses the highest ethical standards for the conduct of all scholarly pursuits to ensure public trust in the integrity of

results. The university requires that all affiliated persons (including faculty, staff, researchers, and students) conduct activities with integrity. The university is committed to fostering an environment that promotes responsible conduct of research, training, and all other scholarly activities. Scholarly integrity is characterized by honesty, transparency, personal responsibility, excellence, and trustworthiness. All persons engaged in scholarly pursuits at the university are expected to conduct their scholarship in accordance with their respective field's scholarly expectations and best practices.

The university recognizes that deception in research erodes the credibility of an institution and the confidence of those who might benefit from the research. The university takes all reasonable and practical steps to foster a research environment that promotes the responsible conduct of research and research training (and activities related to that research or research training), discourages research misconduct, and deals promptly with allegations or evidence of possible research misconduct. [Policy 13020, "Policy on Misconduct in Research"](#) establishes expectations for integrity in research, outlines prohibited practices, and describes the procedure for handling allegations of research misconduct. These requirements are intended to protect the integrity of research produced by university personnel and associates.

### **10.11.1 Definitions**

Misconduct in research (or research misconduct) means fabrication, falsification, plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

**Fabrication** is making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

**Falsification** is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

**Plagiarism** is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words, including those of a student, colleague, or mentor, without giving appropriate credit.

Research misconduct does not include honest error, differences in opinion, or disputes over authorship except those involving plagiarism. While the following activities are considered detrimental research practices and are subject to other university policies and supervisory oversight, they are not included in the legal definition of research misconduct: issues relating to sexual harassment, personnel management, fiscal errors, poor or incomplete record keeping, misrepresentation of study findings, and abuse or improper procedures with laboratory animals or human subjects.

### **10.11.2 Activities Covered**

[Policy 13020, "Policy on Misconduct in Research,"](#) applies to allegations of research misconduct (fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results) involving a person who at the time of the alleged research misconduct was employed by, was an agent of, or was affiliated by contract or agreement with the university and was engaged in research under the auspices of the university at the time of the occurrence of the alleged research misconduct. Any student engaged in sponsored research is also covered by this policy.

Misconduct in non-research activities and other ethical violations are covered by separate policies. Ethical misconduct of faculty, including self-plagiarism (sometimes referred to as "text



recycling”), is covered in chapter two of this handbook “Professional Responsibilities and Conduct,” which describes the principles of ethical behavior. Violations of ethical conduct by graduate students are guided by the constitution of the [Graduate Honor System](#). Professional students in the [Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine](#) or the [Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine](#) must consult the honor code for their college/school. Violations of ethical conduct by undergraduate students are guided by the university’s honor system, as outlined on the [Office of Undergraduate Academic Integrity website](#). Standards of conduct and performance, as well as procedures for dealing with alleged violations of unacceptable conduct and grievance procedures, are available in the employee handbooks located on the [Human Resources](#) page.

### **10.11.3 Procedures for Reporting, Investigating, and Resolving Misconduct in Research**

The university has established detailed procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving misconduct in research. Those procedures are available in [Policy 13020, “Policy on Misconduct in Research.”](#) The research integrity officer is responsible for overseeing the procedural process. Any questions regarding the policy or procedures should be addressed to the research integrity officer in the Office of Research and Innovation.

### **10.12 Removal of a Principal, Co-Principal, Lead Investigator, or Equivalent**

Funding agreements are legal contracts between the sponsor and the university rather than an individual, thereby obligating the university to ensure compliance with any and all applicable policies, regulations, or specific conditions as stipulated in the funding agreement. Removal of an investigator from a sponsored project may be necessary or warranted under unusual circumstances such as incapacity (unable to carry out the responsibilities as an investigator), misuse of funds, failure to comply with university and sponsored programs’ policies or state or federal regulations, failure to disclose or appropriately manage a significant conflict of interest, established cases of research misconduct ([see Policy 13020 “Policy On Misconduct in Research”](#)), or in response to a request by the sponsor of the project.

[Policy 13025, “Removal of a Principal, Co-Principal, Lead Investigator or Equivalent”](#), governs the removal of a principal, co-principal, lead investigator, or the equivalent. Funding agencies and sponsors vary in their requirements; the terms of the specific contract with a sponsor guide the university’s actions whenever this policy is invoked. This policy applies to investigators who hold identified responsibilities as principal, co-principal, lead investigator, or equivalent (hereafter referred to collectively as the investigator).

### **10.13 Effort Certification and Salary Charges to Sponsored Grants and Contracts**

#### **10.13.1 Effort Reporting and Certification**

[Consult Effort Reporting](#). The purpose of effort certification is to confirm after the end of the reporting period that salaries and wages charged to each sponsored agreement are reasonable in relation to the actual work performed. [Policy 3105, “Effort Certification,”](#) describes the procedures for required effort certification in accordance with federal regulations. Individual investigators, departments, and other university administrators have specific responsibilities under the policy for certifying effort, monitoring compliance, and assuring that only allocable charges are made to grants and contracts. Federal audits have made clear that only effort directly related to a project can be charged to that project and salary expenditures on behalf of the project must occur during the effort reporting period. The university takes its obligations to comply with federal regulations very seriously; failure to comply may mean severe financial penalties and/or

loss of opportunity for future grants from the federal sponsor. To be consistent and fair to all sponsors, the same kind of accountability applies to non-federal grants and contracts.

Salary costs for faculty, staff, and graduate and professional students are one of the largest cost categories for sponsored projects. Internal controls over salary costs include procedures to ensure that salary costs comply with federal regulations and [Policy 3240, "Costing Principles for Sponsored Projects."](#) That is, all salary costs charged to a sponsored project must be reasonable for the work performed, necessary for the performance of the project, allowable per sponsor and university policies, and allocable to the project.

Effort certification is particularly complex for instructional faculty members who manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously, seamlessly moving from class to supervising graduate and professional students, to conducting research and developing the next proposal in the same day or week. Indeed, most instructional faculty members are engaged in teaching, administrative tasks, or other duties in addition to their work on sponsored projects, even during the summer. Yet only activities directly related to a sponsored project may be charged to that grant or contract; institutional activity is supported by other, non-sponsored funding (or may be uncompensated during the summer).

If the faculty member (regardless of type of appointment) has responsibilities for competitive proposal writing or participation in well-defined, regular teaching or administrative duties (e.g., committee work, hiring, advising, tenure review), a 100% allocation of the salary to sponsored projects is prohibited during the effort reporting period in which such activity occurs.

Incidental, inconsequential non-project activity performed rarely may be considered de minimis and need not be part of full load for purposes of effort reporting.

Proposal writing for new competitive awards and competitive renewal awards may not be charged to sponsored projects, nor would such proposal writing be considered de minimis activity. Preparation of non-competitive, continuation award proposals (progress reports) may be charged to the applicable sponsored project.

Faculty members who receive summer salary from sponsored projects must certify the effort expended on those projects during the summer period. Work done on the sponsored project during the academic year cannot be counted toward summer effort on the project.

Failure to follow the provisions of [Policy 3105, "Effort Certification"](#), may subject the individuals and departments responsible for the violation(s) to administrative and/or disciplinary actions in accordance with university disciplinary procedures.

If effort reports are not completed and returned in a timely manner, salary costs associated with uncertified grant activity may be removed and charged to a departmental account.

Following appropriate notice, faculty members with delinquent or improperly completed effort reports may be placed on a suspension list by the Office for Sponsored Programs and denied eligibility for OSP services, including but not limited to proposal preparation, account set-up, and budget transfers, until effort reports are up to date and properly completed and certified.

Certification of effort reports that are known to be materially inaccurate may expose the individual who completed the reports to personal disciplinary actions.

### **10.13.2 Summer Research Appointments for Nine Month Faculty Members**

Faculty members on academic year (nine-month) appointments are permitted to earn up to three months of additional salary for effort related to sponsored projects, subject to sponsor policies and appropriate internal approvals. Summer funding may be accomplished by research extended appointments or as summer wages.

[Policy 6200, "Policy on Research Extended Appointments."](#) outlines the requirements and procedures for faculty members to extend their nine-month appointments to 10-, 11-, or 12-month appointments depending on the availability of sponsored funding for additional months of salary and full fringe benefits. Although the sponsored funding supports the extended employment contract, salary must be charged to reflect a reasonable estimate of effort throughout the entire appointment period, not just the summer. Given the continuation of some typical university responsibilities during the summer, such as meeting with graduate students, attending professional conferences, or preparing future grant proposals or coursework, faculty members should have a mixture of sponsored and institutional funding to support their summer activities. This can be accomplished by making appropriate charges to the project during the academic year and deferring some institutional funding to the summer period. Faculty members on research extended appointments earn annual leave proportional to the length of their appointment, and they must record the use of annual leave whenever used during the appointment period (all 10, 11, or 12 months). There is no payout for accrued annual leave at the time of reconversion to the base academic year appointment or at the time of separation from the university.

Instead of research extended appointments, academic year faculty members may receive support from sponsored grants and contracts as summer research wage payments, without full fringe benefits. This would typically be the case for faculty members with one or two months of "summer salary" included in the funded grant project. For those with three full months of funding, project effort during the academic year may be charged to the grant (with attendant changes in the fringe benefit rate), thereby allowing departmental salary savings to support non-project related responsibilities during the summer. Faculty members certify their effort across the entire summer period, and some flexibility is allowed if the overall effort and salary charges during the period are consistent.

### **10.13.3 Effort Compliance for Research Faculty Members**

As described above, a research faculty member with regular, well-defined responsibilities for new proposal preparation, teaching, or administrative duties is prohibited from charging 100% of salary to sponsored projects during an effort reporting period in which such activity occurred, unless those activities are specifically allowed on the sponsored project.

Research faculty members are typically on standard 12-month appointments, which earn and accrue annual leave by university policy. Use of annual leave is recognized as an acceptable charge to a sponsored project when such leave is part of the standard university appointment.

## **10.14 Policy on Intellectual Property**

Publicly (state) supported universities have the multiple missions of teaching, research, support of the public interest and fostering of economic development of the area/state in which they are located. Scholarly activities in a university setting create intellectual properties (IPs). IP includes research papers, books, software programs, new inventions, journal articles, etc.

The university's mission includes dissemination of IPs in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The identification and optimization of opportunities for the industrial/commercial utilization of some IPs is also part of this mission, as is the protection of the ownership rights of both the individuals and the university.

While many IPs are best disseminated by publication and placing in the public domain, there are a significant number that are most effectively handled by protection under the IP laws (i.e., patenting and copyright) and licensing (or other transfer) to private sector entities, with attendant financial considerations.

Timely disclosure of IPs to the University (pursuant to [Policy 13000, "Policy on Intellectual Property"](#)) is critical to preserving potential value of certain IPs while enabling Virginia Tech to deliver on its mission to ensure impact of research, discovery, and scholarly output. Policy 13000, "Policy on Intellectual Property," outlines intellectual property (IP) ownership criteria, resolution of ownership questions, and responsibilities of university employees concerning the disclosure and potential assignment of intellectual properties. Policy 13000 also sets forth the authority and responsibility of the Intellectual Property Committee (IPC), the chair of which is the senior vice president and chief research and innovation officer or designee. Membership of the IPC is set forth in the bylaws of the University Council.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN - FACULTY BENEFITS

### 11.0 Faculty Benefits

Eligible faculty members are required to participate in a group life insurance plan, a retirement plan, and disability plan. Selection of required benefits must occur within 60 days of employment. Contact [Human Resources](#) for information. In the event of any changes in third-party benefits, vendor information is immediately available in the [“Benefits”](#) section of the Human Resources website.

### 11.1 Health Insurance

Health insurance is an optional program available to all full-time and eligible part-time faculty and staff members. Coverage is offered for the member’s spouse and for eligible dependents through the end of the calendar year that they reach age 26. Employees may participate in the state employees’ health insurance plans by contacting the Human Resources Service Center.

For employees who work at least .75 FTE the employer pays a major portion of the employee’s health care premium. Employee plus one and family coverage is also available under this plan. Employees whose FTE is between .50 and .74 are eligible to enroll in a health care plan, however the employee pays 100% of the premium.

Newly eligible employees (newly hired or rehired) must request enrollment within 30 calendar days to enroll in a health plan and/or flexible spending accounts (FSA) offered by the state. If the enrollment action is received within the 30-day calendar timeframe, coverage will be effective the first of the month coinciding with or following the date of employment. The 30-day countdown period begins on the first day of employment. For employees whose employment starts on the first day of the month, and who have completed an application within 30 calendar days, the coverage will begin on their date of hire.

Status changes to an eligible position have up to 60 calendar days to enroll in a health plan offered by the state. The 60-day countdown period begins on the date of the status change. Coverage will be effective on the first of the month following receipt of the request or following the event, whichever is later. When the later date is the first of the month, changes are effective that day.

Enrollment or enrollment changes cannot be made outside of the open enrollment period unless there is a qualifying mid-year event such as marriage, divorce, birth, or adoptions. Enrollment must be made within 60 calendar days of the qualifying event.

Open enrollment is usually held during the month of May each year for employees desiring to enroll or to make changes in their health care program. Any enrollment or changes made during open enrollment are effective on July 1.

#### 11.1.1 Health Flexible Spending Account

Salaried faculty members who work at least 20 hours per week (.50 FTE) are eligible to enroll in the commonwealth’s health flexible spending account (FSA), which allows them to set aside part of their income on a pre-tax basis and then use that money to pay for eligible out-of-pocket health care expenses for themselves, a spouse, and dependents. The minimum that may be set aside is \$10 per pay period; the annual maximum is established by the IRS and may change from year to year. A monthly pre-tax administrative fee does apply.

New faculty (with the exception of transfers from other state agencies) must request enrollment within 30 calendar days to enroll in the health FSA. Each year during open enrollment in the spring, faculty may renew FSA accounts or elect to enroll for the first time. Changes made during open enrollment are effective the following July 1. Certain qualifying mid-year events may be made outside the open enrollment period if the request for change is made within 60 calendar days of the qualifying event. Contact the Human Resources Service Center about specific qualifying mid-year events for family status change.

### **11.1.2 Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account**

Salaried faculty who work at least 20 hours per week (.50 FTE) are eligible to enroll in the commonwealth's dependent care flexible spending account (FSA), which allows them to set aside part of their income on a pre-tax basis to pay for eligible dependent care expenses throughout the coverage period for the care of a child, disabled spouse, elderly parent, or other dependents who are physically or mentally incapable of self-care so that the faculty member (and spouse) can work or actively seek work. The minimum that may be set aside is \$10 per pay period; the annual maximum is \$5,000 per year established by the IRS and may change from year to year. A monthly pre-tax administrative fee does apply.

New faculty employees (with the exception of transfers from other state agencies) must request enrollment within 30 calendar days to enroll in the dependent care (FSA). Each year during open enrollment in the spring, faculty may renew FSA accounts or elect to enroll for the first time. Changes made during open enrollment are effective the following July 1. Certain qualifying mid-year events may be made outside the open enrollment period if the request for change is made within 60 calendar days of the qualifying event. Contact the Division of Human Resources about specific qualifying mid-year events for family status change.

### **11.2 Group Life Insurance (required employee participation)**

Participation in the group life insurance program is required of all full-time and part-time salaried faculty members. Consult Human Resources [Life Insurance](#) web page. The university pays the monthly premium and coverage is effective on the first day of employment.

A faculty member who leaves the university may convert the term insurance policy to a private policy if the request is made within 31 days after termination.

Per IRS requirements, life insurance in excess of the established excludable limit, in a calendar year, is taxable to current employees and those eligible for retirement upon separation.

#### **11.2.1 Term Life Insurance**

Optional term life insurance for the faculty member, the spouse, and children is available through the optional term life insurance program. If you apply for optional term life insurance within 31 days from the date of employment, you may receive all options, up to a maximum death benefit of \$400,000, without medical underwriting. Coverage may be applied for outside of the 31 days, but medical underwriting will be required. The coverage is provided by Securian Financial.

#### **11.2.2 Whole Life Insurance**

After the initial enrollment period in 2015, only new hires and those who initially elected to take at least a minimum \$5,000 policy will be allowed to add to their coverage on a guaranteed basis. New York Life whole life insurance is an optional program available to full time faculty and staff members who meet eligibility requirements.

Employees can purchase a minimum \$5,000 to a maximum \$100,000 of death benefit on a guaranteed issue basis. Spouses, domestic partners, children, and grandchildren are eligible for a minimum \$5,000 and maximum \$25,000 of death benefit with no medical questions if the employee participates.

### **11.2.3 Long-Term Care Insurance**

Genworth Life Insurance Co. offers long-term care insurance coverage, under the Commonwealth of Virginia Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program, which assists with costs related to long-term care services such as nursing home care or at-home care to assist with bathing, eating or other activities of daily living which may not be covered by most medical plans. Participant-paid coverage provides a monthly benefit allowance for covered long-term care expenses. Employees do not have to be a VRS member to be eligible, and family members may also apply for coverage.

### **11.2.4 Supplemental Insurance Plans**

Aflac offers several supplemental insurance plans that pay cash benefits to help with expenses due to injury or illness. The cost of these plans will vary based upon the level of benefits purchased. The benefits are pre-determined and paid regardless of any other insurance that an individual may have. Aflac offers the following plans: accident plan, cancer plan, critical care, hospital protection, and short-term disability. Aflac is an optional program available to faculty and staff members on at least a half-time appointment.

New hires may enroll within 30 days and all other changes may be made during open enrollment, which for this benefit is held annually during the month of September.

### **11.2.5 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance**

Accidental death and dismemberment insurance is an optional program available to faculty and staff members on at least half-time appointment. The policy is with Zurich.

Accidental death and dismemberment insurance is available in multiples of \$5,000, in a range of benefits from \$10,000 to \$250,000. The employee pays the entire premium. Coverage is effective on the first day of the month following the month in which the application is received by Human Resources. An employee may enroll at any time in this program.

This coverage has full 24-hour, 365-days-a-year protection against accidents occurring during business or pleasure. The insurance includes accidents whether on or off the job, occurring in or away from the home, or traveling by public or private transportation. The benefits provided under this plan are payable in addition to other insurance that may be in effect at the time of accident. There are no geographical limits on this coverage. This policy also provides travel-assist coverage at no additional cost.

## **11.3 Retirement Plans (required employee participation)**

All eligible faculty members are required to participate in a retirement plan and must choose either the [Virginia Retirement System \(VRS\)](#) or the [Optional Retirement Plan \(ORP\)](#) within 60 days of employment. If no choice is made, the default is the [VRS Hybrid Plan](#) (or other applicable VRS plan option) and will include enrollment in the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program. Consult the [Retirement page](#) on the Human Resources website for resources on retirement plans.

Part-time salaried faculty members working half-time, or more are eligible to participate in either the ORP or the VRS to the extent permitted by the VRS.

**The Virginia Retirement System (VRS).** Consult the [Human Resources Virginia Retirement System webpage](#) for information on eligibility, Plans 1 and 2, the Hybrid Retirement Plan, separation from the university, purchasing prior service, investment options, and Social Security. All VRS contributions are subject to applicable compensation and contribution limits per the Internal Revenue Code (IRC).

**Optional Retirement Plan (ORP).** Consult the [Human Resources Optional Retirement Plans webpage](#). Contributions are subject to applicable compensation and contribution limits per the Internal Revenue Code. For faculty members hired before July 1, 2010, the university contributes 10.4% of base salary. No employee contribution is required. For faculty members hired on or after July 1, 2010, the university contributes 8.5% of base salary and the employee contributes 5% of their base salary.

### **11.3.1 Tax-Deferred Investments/Deferred Compensation/Cash Match**

These programs offer opportunities for employees to invest a portion of their salaries and/or wages on a pre-tax or post-tax basis. Full-time or part-time salaried faculty and staff may be eligible for the employer-paid cash match program. Information is also available on the Human Resources website under [Human Resources Retirement page](#).

## **11.4 Workers Compensation Program**

All employers are required to provide protection to their employees for job-related injuries, illnesses, or loss of life. The purpose of the workers' compensation program is to ensure that all university employees with injuries or illness arising out of and during the course of employment with the university are offered fixed, certain, and speedy relief. The Commonwealth of Virginia workers' compensation services are provided by Managed Care Innovations, LLC, Workers' Compensation Department, P.O. Box 1140, Richmond, VA 23208-1121.

### **11.4.1 Reporting Work-Related Injuries**

In the event of a job-related injury or illness, [Policy 4415, "Workers' Compensation,"](#) provides procedures the employee and supervisor should follow. An injured employee is required to report an accident or illness to the direct supervisor as soon as possible. Once an employee reports a job-related injury, the supervisor must file the employer's accident report within 24 hours of the occurrence. A claims adjuster from Managed Care Innovations, LLC, the university's worker's compensation carrier, will be assigned to handle the claim.

### **11.4.2 Unemployment Insurance**

All employees of the university are covered by unemployment insurance. If for some reason employees become unemployed by no fault of their own, they may qualify for this insurance. If employees lose their jobs, they should contact the Virginia Employment Commission immediately to file an unemployment claim.

## **11.5 Disability (required employee participation)**

Selection of a disability plan is required within 60 days of employment. No selection results in defaulting in VSDP. Information on short and long-term disability is available on the [Disability page](#) of the Human Resources website. Faculty members who enroll in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) will be placed in Virginia Tech's faculty sick leave plan. Faculty members who enroll in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) will choose between the Virginia Tech faculty sick leave plan or the Virginia Sickness and Disability Plan (VSDP).



Long-term disability insurance provides income replacement based on 60% of the pre-disability salary after a six-month period if the employee is deemed disabled. These benefits may be offset by Social Security and federal retirement (if applicable). The maximum and minimum monthly benefits are outlined on the [Disability page](#) of the Human Resources website.

**Faculty members on regular appointments.** Faculty members on regular appointments who select the Virginia Tech Faculty Sick Leave Plan in lieu of the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP) are provided with 1040 hours (based on 1 FTE) of sick leave at the time of employment. This equates to six months of income protection i.e. short-term disability coverage. After short-term disability is exhausted the faculty long-term disability program takes effect and provides disability income to age 65 or for five years if over age 60 at the onset of disability (consult the [Disability page](#) of the Human Resources website).

Faculty members enrolled in the Virginia Retirement System may participate in the Virginia Sickness and Disability Plan (VSDP) which provides short-term disability for six months and long-term disability to age 65 or later depending on age at the time of disability. There is a one-year waiting period from the date of employment to be eligible for the VSDP short- and long-term disability benefits. The selection for coverage under VSDP is irrevocable.

Faculty members who default into the VRS plan will be placed in the VSDP.

**Faculty members on restricted appointments.** Faculty members on restricted appointments not enrolled in the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP) are automatically enrolled in a short-term disability plan administered by a third party. While on an approved short-term disability leave, the restricted faculty member is provided with 60% of their salary for up to six months after an initial seven-day period. Employees who are considered disabled after six months will transition into the faculty long-term disability plan.

Faculty members on restricted appointments who selected coverage under VSDP and converted to a regular faculty appointment on or after September 1, 2017, are required to remain in the VSDP.

### **11.6 Holidays**

Consult the Human Resources [Holidays and Winter Break webpage](#) for information. Holidays observed by faculty members are New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day following, Christmas Day, the four days comprising winter break between December 25 and January 1, and other holidays that the governor may designate. If faculty members are required to work on these days due to extenuating circumstances as determined by the department head, chair, school director or appropriate supervisor, or if they are designated as emergency personnel, they may use compensatory leave at a later date. Compensatory days do not accrue as annual leave.

### **11.7 Leave**

Consult the [Faculty Leave](#) webpage on the Human Resources website. Several types of leave, with or without compensation, are available. The types of leave available are contingent on the type of appointment: regular or restricted, calendar year (CY) or academic year (AY), full or part-time, and years of service to the university.

**Leave Reporting.** Consult department, school, or administrative unit for information on leave reporting. A link to the Leave and Time Worked Reporting System (password protected) is on the

[Human Resources Leave page](#). Information on reporting leave is available on the [Reporting Your Leave](#) page on the Human Resources website.

### **11.7.1 Annual Leave**

Consult the Human Resources [Faculty Leave page](#) for information. Annual leave must be earned before it is used. Approval of the department head, chair, school director or supervisor is required in advance of using annual leave.

Faculty members with accrued annual leave who temporarily change their status (for example, going on leave without pay or changing to a part-time appointment for a short period of time) should contact Human Resources to discuss their options and indicate their preference for either payout of their leave balance or retention of their leave balance until they resume full-time status.

**Academic Year (AY) Appointment.** Faculty members on academic year (AY) appointments do not earn or accrue annual leave. Administrative and professional (A/P) faculty members on regular, academic year (AY) appointments earn annual leave only during the period of their appointment and at the same rate as A/P faculty members on a regular, calendar year (CY) appointment.

**Academic Year (AY) Faculty with Research Extended Appointment.** Faculty members on research extended appointment earn annual leave proportional to their appointment. However, unused annual leave is not compensated at the time of reconversion or separation from the university.

**Calendar Year (CY) Appointment.** Faculty members on a calendar year (CY) appointment earn two days (16 hours) of annual leave per month. After 20 years of continuous employment by the commonwealth, 18 hours of annual leave are earned per month.

Faculty members on calendar year regular (CY) appointments, may carry forward accrued annual leave to a maximum of 36 days (288 hours) at the beginning of each leave year or may be paid up to the maximum on termination of employment. After 20 years of service, the maximum accrued leave carried forward or paid upon separation becomes 42 days (336 hours).

Faculty members on regular, CY appointments are eligible to donate annual leave hours to the [leave sharing program](#). Only full-time and part-time salaried staff employees may be recipients of leave sharing.

**Calendar Year (CY) Faculty on Research Leave.** Calendar year (CY) faculty members on research leave earn annual leave at a rate that is half their usual annual leave earnings.

### **11.7.2 Sick Leave**

Faculty members are encouraged to talk with an HR professional to discuss the use of sick leave for extended absences. Consult the Human Resources website [Faculty Leave webpage](#). The types of leave available are contingent on the type of appointment, regular or restricted, calendar or academic year, full or part-time. Department heads, chairs, school directors, deans, and other supervisors are urged to be flexible within existing university policy in responding to the need for leave or temporary adjustment of duties for family-related reasons.

Plans include the Virginia Tech Faculty Sick Leave Plan, the Faculty Family Sick Leave Plan (excludes faculty members in the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program), and Faculty Family Leave.

### **11.7.3 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

For detailed information and FMLA-required forms consult the Human Resources [FMLA webpage](#). Faculty members are encouraged to discuss the use of FMLA with the appropriate [Human Resources Representative](#). Eligible faculty members are granted unpaid family or medical leave for one or more of the following: birth of a child; placement of a child with the faculty member for adoption or foster care; the care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, parent) who has a serious health condition; or a serious health condition that makes the faculty member unable to perform the position's function. Prior to leave approval, the department head, chair, school director, or supervisor may require documentation of the health condition necessitating care of a family member by the employee or the employee's own health condition.

### **11.7.4 Paid Parental Leave**

The commonwealth provides eight (8) weeks (320 hours) of paid parental leave to employees on a regular or restricted appointment and a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive months of employment. The paid parental leave policy is in addition to other leave benefits available to commonwealth employees. If both parents are eligible employees each shall receive parental leave which may be taken concurrently, consecutively, or at different times within six (6) months.

### **11.7.5 Leave without Pay or Leave of Absence**

Consult Human Resources [Leave without Pay webpage](#) and [Leave of Absence webpage](#). Eligible faculty members may be granted leave without pay for up to one year (academic year or calendar year depending on type of appointment) guaranteeing their job during the period of leave. A second year of leave without pay may be requested and approved in unusual cases. Approval by the provost or the Office of Research and Innovation is required.

### **11.7.6 Educational Leave**

Consult Policy 4800 "Tuition Benefits Program for Salaried Employees" and policy 4810 "Educational Leave for Employees. [Consult policy 4810 Educational Leave for Employees](#). An [Educational Leave Request Form](#) is available on the provost's website. Contact Faculty Affairs in the provost's office for additional guidance.

### **11.7.7 Military Leave**

Consult the Human Resources "[Other Leave Types](#)" webpage for information and contact Human Resources for guidance and a full description of military leave benefits, conditions, and reinstatement. Military leave is available to all faculty members including those on restricted, wage, or adjunct appointments. Faculty members are eligible for leave with pay for 21 days including an additional day for a physical in a federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30) for military duty, including training, if they are members of any reserve component of the Armed Forces or the National Guard. Twenty-one days of paid military leave plus an additional day for a physical is the maximum allowable for one tour of duty, even when that tour encompasses more than one federal fiscal year. Employees may use accrued annual leave to continue their pay while on military leave. Employees are granted unconditional leave without pay for the duty indicated in their military orders that is not covered by military leave with pay. To qualify for military leave, faculty members must furnish their department head, chair, school director and Human Resources with copies of their orders.

Employees are reinstated to their previous positions or to positions comparable to their previous positions provided that certain conditions are met. Requests for reinstatement must be made to Human Resources and should state that the individual is seeking reinstatement to employment

upon return from military service. If the military leave was for a period of 31 to 180 days, the employee must apply for reinstatement within 14 days of discharge. If the military leave was for a period of 181 days or more, the employee must apply for reinstatement within 90 days of discharge.

#### **11.7.8 Civil Administrative Leave**

Consult the Human Resources "[Other Leave Types](#)" webpage for information. If a faculty member is called for jury duty, subpoenaed, or summoned to appear in court, this absence may be charged to administrative leave, except when a defendant in a criminal or civil case. This leave should be requested before it is taken. Any time spent in court as a defendant in a criminal or civil case must be charged to annual leave, compensatory leave, or leave without pay. Faculty members receive full pay for administrative leave provided a copy of a subpoena or other supporting document accompanies the leave report.

Administrative leave with pay is not granted for more time than required for the purpose for which it is taken. Any additional administrative leave taken on the same day must be charged to leave without pay or appropriate leave balances and reported in the monthly leave report.

Faculty members are granted administrative leave to attend work-related hearings as a witness under subpoena or regarding a personal claim. Administrative leave may be used when called to serve on councils, commissions, boards, or committees of the commonwealth. Administrative leave is not used if a faculty member is serving as an official representative of the university. The time is treated as part of the faculty member's regular work hours.

#### **11.7.9 Disaster Relief Leave**

Department heads, chairs, school directors, and supervisors may grant release time to faculty members when they are formally called to provide disaster relief services because of their specialized skill or training. Release time for faculty is not recorded in the leave system. For audit purposes, a record of time off should be noted in the faculty member's departmental or school file, along with the written request.

#### **11.8 Part-time Employment**

Faculty members on regular appointments may request consideration for part-time employment at proportional pay. Assigned responsibilities, including service assignments, will vary depending on the needs of the individual and the department or school and should be discussed in advance. The department head, chair, school director, or supervisor may require the faculty member to be assigned different responsibilities or transferred to another position at the same salary to accommodate the intermittent leave or reduced schedule.

#### **11.9 Employee Assistance Program**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a counseling and referral service available to faculty and staff to help deal with a range of problems that might have an impact on their work lives as well as personal lives. The EAP provides confidential short-term intervention, assessment, and referral services for benefitted employees. Employees may self-refer to the EAP. A supervisory referral can be made when a work performance or work site problem exists. Supervisors must consult in advance with Employee Relations in Human Resources on appropriate ways to address the issue with the employee.

The Employee Assistance Program is part of the health benefits program provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia, which contracts with a provider of mental health and behavioral

management services. The contract provides employees with several free counseling sessions with a mental health professional certified by the approved EAP contractor. The cost of additional services, beyond the specified number of free sessions, is the responsibility of the employee.

With appropriate approvals by senior administrators, an employee may be referred for a mandatory fitness-for-duty examination in cases where the employee poses a hazard or risk to self or others, or if a determination of the employee's medical or psychological fitness to perform the essential job functions is needed. A supervisor who is considering a mandatory EAP referral must first have the approval of the vice president for human resources or designee, as well as the relevant vice president or designee for faculty.

### **11.10 Legal Resources**

Legal Resources is an optional benefit that may be purchased which provides comprehensive legal services and representation for the employee, spouse and dependent children paid at 100% for the most often-needed legal services. Other services are offered at a 25% discount. New employees may enroll within 60 days of employment and all other changes to coverage may be made during open enrollment, which for this benefit is annually during the month of September.

## CHAPTER TWELVE - VIRGINIA TECH CARILION SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

### 12.0 Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) Faculty

For policies applicable to VTCSOM faculty members employed by the university see the appropriate chapter in this handbook. This includes tenure-track and tenured faculty (chapter three), instructional faculty not on the tenure-track (visiting, adjunct, professor of practice, clinical faculty, collegiate faculty, and instructors), research faculty (chapter six), administrative and professional (A/P) faculty (chapter seven). Chapters two and 11 of this handbook include policies applicable to all faculty.

VTCSOM faculty members are of two types: faculty employed by the university or faculty employed by other entities (in most cases the Carilion Clinic). At all times, regardless of employer, faculty members providing instruction, academic support, or performing academic duties or roles as a VTCSOM faculty member are governed by VTCSOM and the university's policies and procedures.

Faculty members with assigned duties in the VTCSOM, but not employed by Virginia Tech, are subject to the employment policies of their employer(s), but the VTCSOM has sole responsibility for assigning duties, including discontinuation of assignment, in accordance with governance procedures stipulated in VTCSOM bylaws.

### 12.1 Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine Faculty

**Regular\* Faculty.** A member of the faculty may have a primary appointment to the VTCSOM in a tenure-to-title track or non-tenure-to-title track.

**Regular\* Primary.** A primary appointment includes a substantial commitment to the mission of the VTCSOM with regular engagement in teaching and service to the VTCSOM, and the pursuit of scholarship in medicine.

**Ranks: assistant professor, associate professor, or professor**

#### Instructional Faculty

**Ranks: adjunct assistant professor, adjunct associate professor, adjunct professor, clinical preceptor, instructor, or senior instructor**

#### VTCSOM Faculty Appointments and Ranks

Regular* Appointment	Appointment Description	Rank
<b>Tenure-to-Title Track</b>	Primary appointment within the medical school on the tenure-to-title track; possess a substantial commitment to the mission of VTCSOM, regularly engage in teaching and service to VTCSOM, and pursue scholarly activities in medicine.	Eligible for promotion as experience and accomplishment warrant to the following ranks:  Assistant, Associate, Professor

<b>Non-Tenure-to-Title Track</b>	Primary appointment within the medical school on the non-tenure-to-title track; possess a substantial commitment to the mission of VTCSOM, regularly engage in teaching and service to VTCSOM, and pursue scholarly activities in medicine.	NA
<b>Instructional Appointment</b>	<b>Appointment Description</b>	<b>Rank</b>
<b>Adjunct</b>	<p>Current or previous appointment with another academic institution; defined role in teaching or mentoring medical students.</p> <p>Must possess a doctoral or other terminal degree.</p> <p>Appointments are typically for up to three years and may be renewed. Ineligible for tenure-to- title, but eligible for reappointment.</p>	<p>Assistant Adjunct Professor</p> <p>Associate Adjunct Professor</p> <p>Adjunct Professor</p>
<b>Clinical Preceptor</b>	<p>Faculty members who teach medical students primarily in a clinical setting. Clinical Preceptors are physicians with a MD, DO, MBBS, or equivalent degree.</p> <p>Appointments are typically for up to three years and may be renewed. Ineligible for tenure-to- title, but eligible for reappointment and promotion.</p>	The Clinical Preceptor title does not change, even with prolonged service, unless a promotion is granted.
<b>Instructors and Visiting Faculty</b>	<p>Instructors are faculty members who may not have doctoral level degrees but have instructional roles with students.</p> <p>Senior instructors are faculty members with doctoral degrees and have a significant instructional role with students. Ineligible for tenure-to-title, but eligible for reappointment and promotion.</p> <p>Visiting faculty members are individuals who are applying for a faculty position, but for whom the opportunity to instruct medical students is anticipated before the faculty appointment process is completed.</p> <p>Appointment as Senior Instructor or Instructor may be up to three years. The appointment as a Visiting Instructor is for no more than six months. Ineligible for tenure-to-title, but eligible for reappointment and promotion.</p>	<p>Instructor</p> <p>Senior Instructor</p> <p>Visiting Instructor</p>

\*Note: the term “regular” for VTCSOM faculty appointments is distinct from the use of the same term in chapter two of this handbook where it is used to distinguish faculty appointments with opportunity for renewal from those appointments that are “restricted” and that have an end date

such as research faculty whose salaries are paid from external funding, visiting professorships or other temporarily available faculty positions.

## **12.2 Tenure-to-Title Track Faculty Appointments**

Exclusive to the VTCSOM, tenure-to-title is the conferring of a permanent, non-employment, appointment to VTCSOM. Tenure-to-title is recognition by the VTCSOM of service and accomplishment of the faculty member and represents the expectation of continued exceptional service and accomplishment by the faculty member to the school (college).

Tenure-to-title is awarded in recognition of a body of accomplishment in teaching, clinical care (if relevant), and scholarship, and in acknowledgment of service to the missions of VTCSOM. As the criteria for tenure-to-title are virtually identical to criteria for promotion, tenure-to-title typically is awarded at the time of promotion.

Tenure-to-title is granted at the discretion of the VTCSOM without any right to, interest in, or expectation of any compensation or guarantee for compensation or future employment and is granted only in the VTCSOM to individuals who are not employed by Virginia Tech.

Once conferred, tenure-to-title is subject to review by the department and school committees on appointment, retention, promotion, and tenure (to title) and can be rescinded for imposition of a severe sanction or dismissal for cause.

Each VTCSOM department shall establish and communicate written guidelines for promotion and tenure- to-title for all applicable categories of appointment. Departmental guidelines must be consistent with VTCSOM and all relevant university promotion guidelines.

## **12.3 Department and VTCSOM Evaluation for Tenure-to-Title and/or Promotion in Rank**

VTCSOM faculty members employed by the university should consult the department head, chair, dean's office, and relevant chapter in this handbook for guidance on evaluation and promotion.

University promotion and tenure information is located on the provost's [Promotion and Tenure](#) webpage.

The tenure-to-title and/or promotion in rank dossier is reviewed at three levels: (1) by an appropriately charged departmental committee and the department head or chair, (2) by an appropriately charged VTCSOM-level committee and the dean, and (3) by the provost. The department head or chair and dean make separate recommendations to the subsequent review levels. The provost reviews VTCSOM committee and dean recommendations and makes recommendations to the president. The Board of Visitors grants final approval.

Each department will establish a committee and process with appropriate faculty representation to evaluate candidates for promotion and/or tenure-to-title sent by the chair of the department. The department chair may chair the committee or remain separate from the committee's deliberations and subsequently receive its recommendations. A faculty member may not participate in the evaluation of a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship.

The VTCSOM committee reviews the candidates recommended by the departmental committee and/or chair. The VTCSOM committee makes a recommendation on each candidate to the dean.



The division of the vote at both the departmental and VTCSOM levels is conveyed to the provost and remains confidential.

If requested by the dean, the VTCSOM committee reviews cases receiving negative recommendations by both the departmental committee and the head or chair. The purposes of the review are to verify that the recommendations are consistent with the evidence, reflect VTCSOM standards, and consider the goals, objectives, and programmatic priorities of the VTCSOM and university.

#### **12.4 Conflicts of Commitment and Interest**

In addition to university policies, VTCSOM faculty members are, as appropriate, subject to the Standards for Commercial Support as promulgated by the Accrediting Council for Continuing Medical Education (AACME).

#### **12.5 Additional Policy Obligations**

Individuals with appointment to the VTCSOM faculty are subject to all relevant and appropriate sections of this handbook and university policies. Including chapter two “Professional Responsibilities and Conduct” and chapter three “Imposition of a Severe Sanction or Dismissal for Cause”.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN - EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

### 13.0 Emergency Management

Students and colleagues anticipate that their instructor or supervisor will know what to do if an emergency occurs. University resources include:

- Virginia Tech Emergency Management, 540-231-4873, @BeHokieReady, [oem@vt.edu](mailto:oem@vt.edu)
- Virginia Tech Police Department - [police.vt.edu](http://police.vt.edu) | 540-382-4343 | @VaTechPolice
- VT Alerts - [alerts.vt.edu](http://alerts.vt.edu) | @vtalerts
- Virginia Tech News - [news.vt.edu](http://news.vt.edu) | @vtnews

### 13.1 Know the Environment

- Know the space in which you teach and work. Identify two or more exit routes.
- Some university spaces include message boards that display VT Alerts.
- Buildings with Fire Alarm annunciators will audibly “speak” VT Alerts messages.
- Know the [Emergency Action Plan](#) for each building.
- The National Weather Service uses "watch" and "warning" in its weather communication to differentiate weather hazards.
  - **Watch:** Conditions are favorable for the development of severe weather.
  - **Warning:** Severe weather has been observed. Listen closely to instructions provided by weather radios, emergency officials, and other alert mechanisms. Seek shelter immediately.

### 13.2 Prepare

- Know the information in this chapter. Keep it with you as a reference.
- Consider different protective actions in your office, teaching, and research spaces.
- [Be Hokie Ready](#). Review the preparedness material on the university’s emergency management website.
- A charged cell phone with you in class, lab, or other location.
- Subscribe to [VT Alerts](#); keep your contact information updated.
- Download the [Hokie Ready](#) app.
- A list of contact numbers (e.g., department leadership, lab supervisors).

### 13.3 Prepare Students and Colleagues

- During the first week of the semester, review:
  - What to do in an evacuation.
  - What to do when instructed to *Shelter or Secure* -in-Place.
  - Remind students to subscribe to VT Alerts and download the Hokie Ready app.

### 13.4 During an Emergency

- Lead by example. Remain calm, follow emergency procedures and/or take protective actions as instructed by VT Alerts or emergency personnel.
- Consider “run, hide, fight” options.

### 13.5 Report the Emergency

- As soon as it is safe, **call 9-1-1** and talk with the dispatcher who answers the call. Do NOT hang up the phone until instructed to do so by the dispatcher.

- Interior emergency phones (blue wall boxes) will work during power disruptions. Not all office phones will work during power outages.
- Be clear and accurate to describe the nature of the emergency.
- Give the dispatcher your full name and telephone number from which you are calling in case you are disconnected.
- Report your location, the more precise, the better. Tell them you are at Virginia Tech, give the street address, building name, and room number.
- If it's safe, ask someone to meet emergency personnel outside of the building.

### **13.6 Medical Emergency**

- Create an open space for the affected individual(s) and emergency personnel
- Do not move an injured person before responders arrive.
- Only those trained properly should provide first aid, CPR, or bleeding control techniques.

### **13.7 SECURE-in-Place (confronted by an assailant)**

To secure-in-place is to put barriers between yourself and an assailant and to deny them access to you. Virginia Tech will send a VT Alert advising you to secure in place if an active, potentially violent, incident is occurring that requires you to act.

- Remain calm.
- If inside, lock the door and/or place a barricade between yourself and the violence or danger.
- Turn off lights and equipment, silence phones (but keep them on), draw blinds, move away from windows and doors.
- Await further instruction from VT Alerts and/or emergency personnel.
- Leave once VT Alerts and/or emergency personnel provide instructions or an "All Clear" is declared by emergency responders or via VT Alerts
- If outside, seek safety inside a building. Lock and/or barricade the door.

#### **13.7.1 Controlling Entry to a Secure Location**

- Manage the security of an indoor space. Before opening a door consider whether the area outside the door can be seen. It is possible that an assailant is waiting outside the door.
- If a description of an alleged assailant has been communicated, and you can see outside the door, compare the person wanting entry to the description.
- Additional considerations: can the area be re-secured? Can the person leave items they are carrying outside the door (e.g. backpack, laptop case, package, etc.)?
- Have the person lift up their shirt, coat, or jacket until the waistline is visible and ask them to rotate 360 degrees in case they might be concealing a weapon.

### **13.8 SHELTER-in-Place (environmental danger)**

To shelter-in-place is to put barriers between yourself and an environmental danger. Virginia Tech will send a shelter in place message if a severe weather incident or similar situation is occurring. If severe weather or other dangerous situation occurs, do not wait for a VT Alerts notification.

- Remain calm.
- Respond immediately. Do not go outside to check the weather conditions.
- Shelter in the closest building. For severe weather, shelter in the building's lowest level, in an interior room or corridor, and away from windows, glass, and unsecured objects.

- Leave doors open to allow others to shelter.
- Avoid large free-standing spaces such as auditoriums and gymnasiums.
- Use stairs if necessary. DO Not use elevators.
- Listen for instruction from VT Alerts and/or emergency personnel.
- Wait for an “All Clear” communication from VT Alerts and/or emergency personnel.

### **13.9 Evacuation**

Evacuation routes are posted in hallways, usually near stairwells or exits.

- Identify and know two evacuation routes.
- Fire alarms are mandatory evacuations. Do not use elevators unless authorized by emergency personnel.
- Encourage everyone to leave the building – do not wait for those who refuse to leave. Inform first responders of those that are in the building.
- Once evacuated, keep students and/or colleagues together. Proceed to the designated assembly point, stay 50 feet from the building.

### **13.10 Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with access and functional needs may need assistance during an emergency. Those who voluntarily identify their needs may need help planning for emergencies. Students with access and functional needs may be accustomed to academic environments in which instructors and others are aware of their needs and may not have considered what they might require to take care of themselves in an emergency. Ask students to self-identify in confidence if they might require special assistance during an emergency. Considerations include:

- **Auditory:** Individuals with hearing impairments may not hear alarms or verbal guidance. A note or hand gestures might be necessary to communicate.
- **Visual:** Individuals with vision impairments may need verbal descriptions and/or help from a classmate or colleague who can escort them. Identify a “buddy” before an emergency.
- **Mobility:** Individuals with restricted mobility may be unable to safely leave a building. With the person’s consent, a classmate or colleague can accompany the individual to an area of refuge (e.g. a stairwell) without blocking the evacuation path.
- [Services for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Office for Equity and Accessibility, ADA & Accessibility Services](#)