**Faculty Promotion at Universities: 5:02:02:20**

**Policy Area**

Personnel Policies

**Applicable Divisions**

Universities

**Purpose**

Promotion in rank is recognition of past achievement of the individual being considered for promotion. In addition, the advancement in rank is recognition of future potential and a sign of confidence that the individual is capable of even greater accomplishments and of assuming greater responsibilities. The policy of the Tennessee Board of Regents is to make promotions strictly on consideration of merit tempered by university and fiscal considerations. The purpose of this policy is to help ensure that promotions are made objectively, equitably, impartially, and as a recognition of merit in line with the following policy guidelines.

**Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, research/scholarship/creative activities and service/outreach will be defined as follows.

* Teaching - Teaching applies to any strategy in which information is imparted so that others may learn, and may include, but is not limited to, a variety of techniques including instruction, student advising and/or mentoring, development of course materials and courseware, and development of innovative approaches to instruction.
* Research/Scholarship/Creative Activities - Research applies to the studious inquiry, examination, or discovery that contributes to disciplinary and interdisciplinary bodies of knowledge.  Research/scholarship/creative activities may include, but are not limited to, disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities that focus on the boundaries of knowledge, field-based scholarship, creative activities (e.g., film-making, performances, or other artistic creations), and the development of cutting-edge teaching approaches.
* Service/Outreach - Service applies to involvement within the community as defined by the university’s role and mission; service to the university; and service within the bounds of the applicant’s academic discipline and budgeted assignment.

A more detailed description of these activities and the criteria to be applied in assessing performance in these three areas may be found in Sections IV and VII of Policy No. 5:02:03:60, "Policy on Academic Tenure for the Tennessee Board of Regents Universities."

**Policy**

1. Introduction
	1. The president of each university is responsible for the master staffing plan of the university.
		1. In developing such a plan, the president will consider the fiscal impact of each promotion recommended to the Board; i.e., resources allocated and distributed to the university.
2. The Evaluation Process
	1. The guidelines which follow provide a general plan for documenting the evaluation process for promotion at each university.
		1. However, each university must develop specific promotion criteria which all units of that university will follow.
		2. The university’s policy must, at a minimum, satisfy the criteria established by these general System guidelines, but may also be more rigorous than the criteria stated herein.
		3. The policy should be written to distinguish between functional areas of instruction, research/scholarship/creative activities and service/outreach and should contain sections that clearly outline promotional procedures, as well as opportunities for appeal of negative decisions.
	2. Once the university has developed its policy complete with process and appellate procedures, it must be forwarded to the Tennessee Board of Regents for review and approval.
		1. The university’s promotion policy will be submitted via the Chancellor to the Committee on Personnel of the Board for review and recommended action.
		2. From the Committee, the university’s policy will be referred to the Board for appropriate action.
		3. Upon Board approval, the university policy becomes a part of Board of Regents Policy.
3. Academic Ranks
	1. The following are criteria that distinguish between academic ranks.
		1. Instructor
			1. Demonstrated ability in instruction student development.
			2. Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
			3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.
		2. Senior Instructor
			1. Documented evidence of high quality teaching and contribution to student development.
			2. Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
			3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.
		3. Master Instructor
			1. Documented evidence of teaching excellence and superior contribution to student development.
			2. Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
			3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.
		4. Assistant Professor
			1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
			2. Evidence of potential ability in instruction, and/or service, and/or research.
			3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.
		5. Associate Professor
			1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
			2. Documented evidence of high quality professional productivity which may lead to national recognition in the academic discipline, and/or consonant with the goals of the university and of the academic unit to which the faculty member belongs.
			3. Documented evidence of ability in instruction and/or service and/or research.
			4. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.
		6. Professor
			1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
			2. Documented evidence of sustained high quality professional productivity and national recognition in the academic discipline or sustained high quality professional productivity in the academic discipline that is consonant with the goals of the university and of the academic unit to which the faculty member belongs.
			3. Documented evidence of teaching excellence and superior contribution to student development or superior scholarly or creative activity will contribute to the positive record of the candidate for advancement to the rank of professor.  Since there is no higher rank, promotion to professor is taken with great care and requires a level of achievement beyond that required for associate professor.  This rank is not a reward for long service; rather it is recognition of superior achievement within the discipline with every expectation of continuing contribution to the university and the larger   academic community.
			4. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity, and a high degree of academic maturity and responsibility.
4. Exceptions to Minimum Rank Qualifications
	1. The minimum rank qualifications should be met in every recommendation regarding appointment to academic rank and for promotion in academic rank.
		1. Exceptions to the minimum rank qualifications can be recommended by the president of a university; however, such exceptions are not favored and should be granted only upon a showing of a candidate's exceptional merit and/or other extraordinary circumstances, such as an objective need to deviate from these minimum qualifications in filling positions and/or retaining otherwise qualified faculty within certain academic disciplines.
		2. Petitions for exceptions to promotional criteria may include consideration of the appropriateness of the degree or extraordinary qualities that the candidate may possess.
			1. The equivalent work experience credit may include relevant teaching experience or other experiences such as experience gained as an administrator, counselor, librarian, journeyman, or the like.
			2. When evaluating college level instruction, research/scholarship/creative activities, and service, the university may make its own determination whether or not the number of years of experience from another university is to be accepted in total or discounted in some manner.
5. Terminal Degree Designation
	1. The Board will use national discipline standards to determine which degrees are considered to be “terminal” within each discipline and will provide each university with a list that delineates these degrees.
	2. Each university may request blanket exceptions to these standards by classification based upon its mission and hiring practice.
	3. Each university may also petition the Board for “equivalent work experience credit” when a candidate has not obtained a terminal degree, but has a record of extraordinary achievement in a given field.
		1. The equivalent work experience credit may include relevant teaching experience or other experiences such as experience gained as an administrator, counselor, librarian, journeyman, or the like.
6. Promotion Criteria
	1. The academic units of the universities must develop written guidelines with specific criteria for evaluating the faculty in teaching, research and service. The departmental guidelines cannot be less rigorous than TBR or university guidelines.
	2. These guidelines should be distributed to all new faculty members and should be easily available at all times, preferably via the Web. Whenever the guidelines are revised, the faculty should be notified of the availability of the revised guidelines.
	3. Guidelines should use the following general criteria as minimum requirements.
		1. Teaching
			1. Evaluation of instruction shall be based on the following criteria with the each unit assigning varying degrees of weight to each criterion. Deficiencies in some criteria may be counterbalanced by superiority in others.
				1. Evaluation by department/division chairperson, and appropriate dean.
				2. Evaluation of curriculum and/or program development; development of instructional techniques (including development of on-line and computer assisted course development), etc.
				3. Promote involvement in student research, scholarship, and creative activities.
				4. Evaluation of the individual's performance in the advisement of students.
				5. Evaluation of the quality of the individual’s performance in graduate and undergraduate student mentoring.
				6. Evaluation of published works in the teaching area; documentation of teaching methodology that may be shared with colleagues.
				7. Honors and recognition for contributions to teaching.
				8. A record that indicates that the individual has remained current in his/her field of specialization and effective in instructional methodology.
				9. Evaluation by peers, especially those in the same academic area (as appropriate for the individual university.)
				10. Student Evaluation of the teaching performance.
		2. Research/Scholarship/Creative Activities
			1. Promotion to associate or full professor requires review of a candidate’s record of scholarly activity by qualified peers.
			2. Evaluation of research shall be based on the following criteria, with the academic units of the university assigning varying degrees of weight to each criterion.  Deficiencies in some criteria should be counterbalanced by superiority in others.
				1. The publication of research in refereed journals or refereed online publications is a reliable indication of scholarly ability.  Consonant with the goals of the university, documented evidence of national recognition may be considered the most important criterion in evaluating scholarship for promotion to full professor. Consonant with the goals of the university, evidence of potential for national recognition may be considered the most important criterion evaluating scholarship for promotion to associate professor.
				2. Books published by reputable firms and articles in refereed journals, reviewed by recognized scholars, are more significant than those that are not subjected to such rigorous examination. It should be emphasized that quality is more important than quantity.
				3. Written reviews and evaluations by qualified external peers, either in person or aided by other forms of reports, or both, are appropriate for performances, compositions, and other artistic creations.
				4. Professional scholarly papers presented at international, national, or regional meetings may be appropriate.
		3. Service/Outreach and Professional Activities
			1. Evaluation of the service component should be based on performance in three areas:
				1. Public service to the community as defined by the university's role and mission;
				2. Service to the university; and service within the bounds of the applicant's academic discipline; and
				3. Budgeted assignment.
			2. Evaluation should be based on all three areas although it is realized that differences in emphases may exist. The academic units of the university shall have the responsibility for determining the emphasis as well as the responsibility for determining specific criteria based on the individual's aspect of work. Evaluation shall be based on the following criteria, with the academic units of the university to which the faculty member belongs assigning varying degrees of weight to each criterion. These criteria should include: community service programs, public service consultation, university, committee and administrative responsibilities, and active contributions to professional associations. In each case, documentation of the evaluation process and criteria shall be as complete as possible. Specific evaluative criteria may be developed using the following as guidelines:
				1. A description of the candidate's position that permits evaluation of performance in relation to assigned and budgeted duties. This should include a statement of the mission or purpose of the position and the objective(s) of the nominee's service unit, as well as the specific assigned tasks and responsibilities of the nominee.
				2. An evaluation of the candidate's effectiveness, as judged by his or her impact on individuals, groups, or organizations served. This should include indices of the success of his/her service, in terms of improvement of communities, programs, operating agencies, production processes, or management practices. It should also include indications of client satisfaction with the service provided by the nominee, and of the magnitude and complexity of his/her work (as opposed to perfunctory activity that does not lead to useful results).
				3. An appraisal of the candidate's local, regional and national stature. Although the achievement of national stature is sometimes difficult for public service faculty whose activities are primarily directed to groups within the State, the public service professional should take advantage of every opportunity to project his/her accomplishments among peers on a local, regional, and national basis. Service/outreach work is sometimes not publishable. The results may be in the form of direct consultations, planning reports, or instructional time directed largely to the recipients of university service programs. But certain aspects of service work are suitable for publication in professional journals. For example, unique techniques developed to motivate clients, or new approaches to the transfer and application of knowledge, would be of interest to peers in other public service programs across the nation.
		4. General Process Guidelines at University Level
			1. So that the decision process can be as objective as possible, each recommendation (forwarded from the department to a higher administrative level in the university) should be accompanied by complete and careful documentation of the candidate’s teaching performance, and/or public service contributions, and/or research. Although the areas of instruction, public service, and research are all considered important, certain exceptions may exist where evaluation may occur in one or the other area exclusively. In these cases, as well as in the general case, appropriate supervisory personnel shall clearly and adequately document the facts which justify the individual's promotion. The initiating unit may, if it deems it desirable, include information relative to the candidate's research activities, publication record, exceptional administrative performance, or other types of contributions. Additional procedures may be used by each university with approval of the Tennessee Board of Regents. For example, the university may wish to establish an interdisciplinary, university-level promotion review committee to review the individual unit recommendations.
		5. General Process Guidelines at Board Level
			1. A list of promotional recommendations should be forwarded by the president of the university to the Chancellor for his/her review. The Chancellor's recommendation will be forwarded to the Committee on Personnel and their recommendation forwarded to the Board.

**Sources**

TBR Board Meeting: April 2, 2004; September 25, 2008; Board Meeting June 20, 2014

This policy is a result of a comprehensive revision of former TBR Policy 5:02:02:00, Faculty Promotion.  The former policy contained provisions related to faculty promotion for both universities and community colleges.  The revision, approved by the Tennessee Board of Regents on April 2, 2004, created separate policies relative to faculty promotion for universities and community colleges.  Faculty members appointed prior to July 1, 2004, may elect to be considered for promotion under the provisions of Policy 5:02:02:00 or under the revised policy for a four-year phase-in period.  The revised policy will be applicable to all promotion actions taken on or subsequent to July 1, 2008, for faculty whose employment began on or after July 1, 2004.

Note: Upon adoption of the former policy at the December 13, 1974 meeting, implementation of the Board-approved university criteria began on September 1, 1975, and no faculty experienced demotion in rank due to the new policies. Upon extending the policy to the technical institutes at the September 30, 1983 meeting, no technical institute faculty shall be demoted in rank as a result of the new provisions.

**Related Policies**

* [Academic Tenure for Universities](https://policies.tbr.edu/policies/academic-tenure-universities)