

1.3.1 The General Faculty AND 2.1.4 Part-Time Appointments

Background/Context:

- The Faculty Senate Charter defines the General Faculty and eligibility for election to the Senate, and our Handbook is currently out of alignment with those definitions. Full-time and part-time faculty are eligible to serve in the Senate, but adjunct faculty are not.
- There are some part-time faculty who are tenured and some who are term instructional faculty. We are removing the language that limits this to instructional term faculty to align with current practice. Since the Senate Charter allows part-time faculty to be elected to the Faculty Senate, and because part-time faculty are part of the General Faculty, we recommend that they also be able to vote.
- It is important to note that adjunct faculty are not part-time faculty. Part-time faculty are sometimes full-time faculty who have (often temporarily) moved to a reduced load to accommodate personal situations or because part of their time is being bought out by another agency. Other part-time faculty are hired into part-time faculty roles from the beginning of their contract because they have employment elsewhere (e.g., judges) but are being hired with a portfolio of responsibilities similar to the responsibilities of full-time faculty. There are currently 61 part-time faculty and 1680 full-time faculty at GMU. Adjunct faculty are hired to teach courses on a course-by-course basis.

Redlined language

1.3.1 The General Faculty

The General Faculty consists of all faculty who have full-time instructional, research, or clinical appointments ~~and all faculty who have part-time instructional appointments at any~~ George Mason University ~~campus~~. The General Faculty participates in governance at the university level.

Meetings of the General Faculty are scheduled by the President of the University, who serves as presiding officer. If at least 10% of the voting membership petitions for a called meeting of the General Faculty, the President is obliged to schedule it within thirty days, or within ten days if the purpose of the call is to consider modification of the authority the General Faculty has granted the Faculty Senate; or reversal of specific decisions of the Senate; or amending the Senate charter. All members of the General Faculty have voting rights on matters that pertain to the General Faculty. All members of the University community may attend meetings of the General Faculty and participate in the debate of matters that come before it. The General Faculty may meet electronically, provided the technology used allows all members to hear each other simultaneously, seek recognition, vote, and exercise other rights.

Without relinquishing the generality of its powers, The General Faculty delegates by Charter to the Faculty Senate the responsibility for shared academic governance at the university level. Only those faculty who have instructional appointments – tenured, tenure-track, term, or ~~adjunct part-time~~ – may be elected to the Faculty Senate.

2.1.4 Part-Time Appointment

~~Term-F~~faculty who are appointed to less than full-time positions are called part-time faculty. Their assignments may include research, service, clinical practice, administrative program development, or instructional responsibilities that go beyond the boundaries of specific courses. Part-time ~~term~~ faculty positions are governed by the same appointment, rank, and title requirements as full-time ~~term~~ faculty positions. The Provost is the final approval level for part-time faculty appointments. Part-time faculty are ~~not~~ voting members of the General Faculty.

Related Passages:

Faculty Senate Charter, I.C.

C. Qualifications of Elected Senators Elected Senators shall be members of the constituent Faculties they represent. A faculty member is eligible to serve on the Faculty Senate if the faculty member holds

1. A full-time instructional tenured, tenure-track, or term appointment with at least one year's full-time service at George Mason University; or

2. A part-time instructional appointment with at least one academic year of continuous service, and completion of at least two Full Time Equivalents in appointments at George Mason University.

2.1.5 Adjunct Appointment

Adjunct Faculty are employees appointed to fulfill the teaching and advising responsibilities associated with a specific course (or a set of specified courses) in a specific semester.

Adjunct Faculty are not voting members of the General Faculty and are not covered by the provisions of this Handbook.

2.1.6 Postdoctoral Research Fellows and Research Staff

Postdoctoral Research Fellows are employees governed by the Postdoctoral Research Fellows Policy. Postdoctoral Research Fellows are not covered by the provisions of the Faculty Handbook.

Research Staff are employees governed by the Research Staff Policy. Research Staff are not covered by the provisions of the Faculty Handbook.

Proposed revision to Faculty Handbook § 1.3.2 concerning Faculty Senate participation by non-senators

George Mason University Faculty Handbook - July 1, 2025, § 1.3.2 The Faculty Senate	Proposed revision
<p>The Senate meets at least monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Meetings of the Senate are open to all members of the university community, who may speak to any item of business on the agenda. Only members of the Senate, however, may introduce motions and vote. The Faculty Senate deliberates in a respectful and open manner, consistent with existing principles of university discourse.</p>	<p>The Senate meets at least monthly during the fall and spring semesters. To the extent permitted by the Senate bylaws, meetings of the Senate are open to all members of the university community, who may speak to any item of business on the agenda. Only members of the Senate, however, may introduce motions and vote. The Faculty Senate deliberates in a respectful and open manner, consistent with existing principles of university discourse.</p>

Explanation

The current language of the Faculty Handbook is inconsistent with the current Faculty Senate bylaws, which restrict speaking privileges to “any person recognized by the President” and which provide for the possibility of closed sessions. Changing the language would make the handbook consistent not only with current bylaws but also with any future changes concerning non-member participation.

2.1.3 Term Appointments

Background/Context for new changes

The Term Faculty Committee has unanimously recommended that we replace the title “Master Instructor” with “Principal Instructor” to eliminate historical connotations of the word “master,” especially in southern states. This same shift is also happening in other industries, such as real estate and software development, for similar reasons.

Background/Context for first set of changes (already approved on November 12 by Faculty Senate- final paragraph):

- It has sometimes been unclear whether faculty who began at GMU as term faculty who then were hired into tenure-track positions were able to include their full body of scholarly and teaching accomplishments in their dossier for tenure consideration.
- It has also been unclear whether term faculty who were hired into tenure-track roles needed to wait the full six-year period to go up for tenure.
- Section 2.1.2 grants all faculty with prior service or unusually strong performance the opportunity to be considered for tenure and promotion early, and section 2.7 specifies that RRPT recommendations should be based on an evaluation of performance over the total period of service at Mason as well as consideration of all scholarly achievements. This revision simply clarifies that those policies also apply for faculty who began their careers as term faculty at Mason, just as they do for faculty who began their careers elsewhere, to remove the ambiguity that was at times being read into 2.1.3.

Redlined Language

2.1.3 Term Appointments

Full-time faculty on fixed-term, non-tenure-track appointments are known as Term Faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on teaching are appointed as instructional faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on research are appointed as research faculty. Term faculty whose assignments focus primarily on clinical practice are appointed as clinical faculty. While term faculty may identify with a primary focus, their assignments may include a blend of teaching, research, service, clinical practice, administrative, or leadership responsibilities that go beyond the boundaries of their primary focus. The faculty member’s specific responsibilities will be stipulated in the appointment contract or assignment letter.

Instructional term faculty with a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Instructional Assistant Professor, Instructional Associate Professor, or Instructional Professor. Research term faculty with a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Research Assistant Professor,

Research Associate Professor, or Research Professor. Clinical term faculty with a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor, or Clinical Professor.

Instructional term faculty without a terminal degree may hold one of the following ranks: Instructor, Senior Instructor, ~~MasterPrincipal~~ Instructor; or Professor of Practice. Clinical term faculty without a terminal degree may hold the rank of Clinical Instructor, Clinical Senior Instructor, or Clinical ~~MasterPrincipal~~ Instructor. Research term faculty without a terminal degree are Research Staff (Section 2.1.6).

Term faculty on single-year appointments whose permanent employment is with another organization hold title with the prefix "Visiting."

Term faculty appointment contracts are issued for a single-year or for multiple years, up to a maximum of 5 years. For initial appointments for faculty with terminal degrees, the maximum contract length for assistant professors is three years and for associate and full professors it is five years. For initial appointments for faculty without terminal degrees, the contract length is one year. If a multi-year appointment is offered to a faculty member whose position relies entirely or partially on non-state appropriated funding, then a multi-year contract may be established subject to the continuing availability of funding throughout the contract period. Exceptions to either contract length or terminal degree requirements must be approved by the Provost.

Contracts automatically expire at the end of the contract period, and although a faculty member may be reappointed (Section 2.7.1), there is no guarantee or right to reappointment from one contract to the next, whether single-year or multi-year.

With the prior approval of the Provost, term faculty with the terminal degree may be considered for a tenure-track or tenured appointment as a result of a search (Section 2.3.2.1) or, rarely, by a direct appointment (Section 2.3.2.2). ~~Service on a term appointment, whether or not externally-funded, may be applied to tenure consideration only if specified in the initial tenure-track letter of appointment. Term faculty who are hired into tenure-track faculty positions will have the same timeline for renewal, promotion, and tenure as all other newly hired tenure-track faculty (Section 2.1.2), but time as a term faculty member does not count as part of the time to renewal and tenure. However, term faculty hired into tenure-track positions have the same opportunity for early tenure consideration, as defined in Section 2.1.2. Scholarly achievements and performance as a term faculty member will be evaluated for tenure consideration consistent with Section 2.7.~~ Term faculty are eligible to be considered for promotion in rank, normally after five years of service.

Commented [LB1]: Faculty Senate has approved this red language

Faculty Profiles for Faculty Handbook: Committee on Faculty Roles & Rewards (CFRR)

Background and Rationale:

The Case for Updating Faculty Profiles (Description of Faculty Ranks, Section 2.2)

In conversations with the George Mason University community across the work of the Task Force and now CFRR, the concern has repeatedly been raised that the Faculty Handbook does not provide contemporary or sufficient descriptions of the profiles of faculty across ranks. Specifically, current Faculty Handbook language refers to general criteria to get to a particular rank, rather than what activities and expectations characterize a particular faculty rank for research, scholarship, and creative activities (RSCA); teaching and student success; and service and leadership. The language below is our proposal for creating and/or modifying an overview of faculty profiles and expected activities for instructional faculty, research faculty, as well as tenure-line assistant, associate, and full professors. This language may supplement existing language for certain faculty ranks.

Current	Proposed
<p>2.2 Description of Faculty Ranks</p> <p>Faculty are either appointed or are promoted to an academic faculty rank. Appointments should be made at the appropriate rank and account for years of professional, teaching, or other experience as judged by the appointing local academic unit and subject to the approval of the Dean and Provost. Faculty are promoted in rank according to the procedures in Section 2.7.</p>	<p>2.2 Description of Faculty Ranks</p> <p>Faculty are either appointed or are promoted to an academic faculty rank. Appointments should be made at the appropriate rank and account for years of professional, teaching, or other experience as judged by the appointing local academic unit and subject to the approval of the Dean and Provost. These descriptions are broad overviews of expectations at each rank; faculty are promoted in rank according to the criteria in Section 2.4 and the procedures in Section 2.7.</p>
<p>2.2.2 Assistant Professor</p> <p>An assistant professor normally holds the terminal degree in the discipline or field and gives promise for making significant contributions to teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and/or clinical work.</p> <p>2.2.3 Associate Professor</p> <p>A faculty member must meet the University's established criteria for advancement to the rank of associate professor as specified in Section 2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure and in Section</p>	<p>2.2.1 Tenure-Line Faculty</p> <p>2.2.1.1 Assistant and Pre-Tenure Associate Professors Assistant and pre-tenure Associate Professors hold a terminal degree in the discipline or field of study and show promise for making significant RSCA contributions to and impact in their fields. These faculty members are learning about effective teaching and mentoring practices in their discipline(s) or field(s) and developing and strengthening their skills to facilitate student success. Assistant and pre-tenure Associate Professors primarily serve their Local Academic Units (LAUs) and establish a track record of service to their profession. They are expected to learn about and uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.</p> <p>2.2.1.2 Tenured Associate Professors Tenured Associate Professors have achieved a critical milestone in an academic career. This rank signifies that a faculty member has successfully completed their probationary</p>

2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty. New faculty who are appointed to the rank of associate professor must have demonstrated equivalent qualifications that meet local academic unit and Faculty Handbook criteria for the rank.

2.2.4 Professor

A faculty member must meet the University's established criteria for advancement to the rank of professor as specified in Section 2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure and in Section 2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty. New faculty who are appointed to the rank of professor must have demonstrated equivalent qualifications that meet local academic unit and Faculty Handbook criteria for the rank.

period and established a strong record of independent accomplishment and impact in RSCA. Faculty members at this rank maintain impactful RSCA contributions and contribute to the university's overall teaching mission through effective, impactful teaching, active mentoring and advising, and substantive curricular and programmatic contributions. Tenured Associate Professors take responsibility for service and shared governance within the university (across all levels) and within their profession(s) and demonstrate promise for sustained contributions. They are expected to uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

George Mason University recognizes that Associate Professors must be afforded the opportunity to prioritize their RSCA and teaching and student success activities to build a case for promotion to professor while also developing and refining their leadership competencies.

2.2.1.3 Tenured Professors

Tenured Professors are recognized for their established expertise in their discipline(s) or field(s) of study and have achieved national – and often international – stature. Faculty at this rank engage in sustained, impactful RSCA and provide substantive leadership in their profession(s), possibly including new collaborations across disciplines and fields of study. Tenured Professors demonstrate ongoing growth as educators, make sustained contributions to student success and teaching effectiveness, and provide pedagogical leadership within and/or beyond the university. They provide service and leadership to the institution (e.g., playing key roles in university governance, assuming substantial

2.2.5 Distinguished University Professor

From time to time the University will encounter opportunities to recognize current members of the faculty or appoint to its faculty people of great national or international reputation. The rank of Distinguished University Professor is reserved for such eminent individuals. Distinguished University Professors are appointed by the President and the Board of Visitors with the advice and consent of a standing committee appointed by the Provost.

Distinguished University Professor appointments are normally reserved for **full** professors. The criteria for such appointments include substantial research or scholarship or arts credentials, as appropriate to the discipline.

service responsibilities) and in their professional field(s) of study (e.g., leadership positions in professional organizations or scholarly journals). Faculty at this rank serve as mentors to students as well as to faculty and staff colleagues. As experienced faculty, they are expected to contribute regularly to the intellectual life of the university and serve as exemplars of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.1.4 Distinguished University Professor

From time to time the University will encounter opportunities to recognize current members of the faculty or appoint to its faculty people of great national or international reputation. The rank of Distinguished University Professor is reserved for such eminent individuals. Distinguished University Professors are appointed by the President and the Board of Visitors with the advice and consent of a standing committee appointed by the Provost.

Distinguished University Professor appointments are normally reserved for tenured **Professors and are limited to no more than 10% of all tenured Professors**. The criteria for such appointments include substantial research or scholarship or arts credentials, as appropriate to the discipline.

2.2.1 Instructor and Professor of Practice

Term faculty without the terminal degree in the field may be appointed as Instructor. An instructor holds the master's degree or equivalent academic and/or professional qualifications and gives promise for making contributions in the area of their primary assignment focus. An instructor may be appointed or promoted in rank (Section 2.1.3) by meeting local academic unit criteria for the rank.

2.2.2 Term Faculty

2.2.2.1 Instructional Assistant Professors and Instructors

The Instructional Assistant Professor (for those with a terminal degree) and Instructor (for those without a terminal degree) ranks signify that the faculty member shows promise for making significant contributions and has demonstrated the potential for continued growth.

Instructional Assistant Professors and Instructors contribute to the university's overall teaching and student success mission through effective teaching and mentoring practices in their discipline(s) or field(s), as well as by developing and strengthening their skills to facilitate student success. While not the primary focus, some level of professional and scholarly activity may be undertaken, including efforts to stay current in the field, participate in professional development, or engage in similar activities. Faculty at this rank are contributing citizens to service activities within the LAU, subject to workload policies and/or agreements. Those who are granted Graduate Faculty Status may serve on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty at this rank are expected to learn about and uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.2 Research Assistant Professors

Research Assistant Professors show promise for making significant RSCA contributions to and impact in their discipline(s) or field(s). Roles for these faculty may be defined by external funding requirements. Faculty at this rank may

mentor graduate students and postdoctoral researchers as part of their workload. They may contribute service to the profession (e.g., manuscript reviewing, participation in professional societies). Those who are granted Graduate Faculty Status may serve on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty at this rank are expected to learn about and uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.3 Instructional Associate Professors and Senior Instructors

The Instructional Associate Professor (for those with a terminal degree) and Senior Instructor (for those without a terminal degree) ranks signify that a faculty member has established a record of high-quality, impactful work and has demonstrated the potential for continued growth and contributions.

Instructional Associate Professors and Senior Instructors contribute to the university's overall teaching and student success mission through effective teaching, active mentoring and advising, and - in some cases – curricular, programmatic, or leadership contributions. While not the primary focus, some level of professional and scholarly activity may be undertaken, including efforts to stay current in the field, participate in professional development, or engage in similar activities. Faculty at this rank are active citizens of the university which typically involves participating in service activities within the LAU, college, and/or university, subject to workload policies and/or agreements. Those who are granted Graduate Faculty Status may serve on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty at this rank are expected to

uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.4 Research Associate Professors

Research Associate Professors are defined by a record of independent, high-quality RSCA. These faculty members demonstrate significant contributions to their field, as evidenced by the appropriate measures of their discipline(s) or field(s) of study and a strong professional reputation. Direct teaching responsibilities are often minimal or non-existent, although faculty at this rank may mentor graduate students and postdoctoral researchers as part of their research program. Active service to the profession (e.g., manuscript reviewing, participation in professional societies) and contributions to the university's research infrastructure (e.g., serving on relevant committees) may be undertaken. Those who are granted Graduate Faculty Status may serve on thesis and dissertation committees. All faculty at this rank are expected to uphold high standards of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.5 Instructional Professors and Principal Instructors

The Instructional Professor (for those with a terminal degree) and Principal Instructor (for those without a terminal degree) ranks signify a faculty member has established a record of achievement and leadership. The expectation is to demonstrate sustained effectiveness and impact.

Instructional Professors and Principal Instructors demonstrate ongoing growth in their contributions to student success and

teaching effectiveness as evidenced by contributions to instructional quality across the institution. This includes course design and assessments that engage learners, curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, and contributions to the university's overall teaching mission. While not the primary focus, some level of professional and scholarly activity may be undertaken, including efforts to stay current in the discipline(s) or field(s), participate in professional development, or other activities. Faculty at this rank are active citizens of the university, contributing to LAU, college, and university committees, subject to workload policies and/or agreements. In some cases, they serve in important and impactful leadership roles. As experienced faculty, they are expected to contribute regularly to the intellectual life of the university and serve as exemplars of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.6 Research Professors

Research Professors are recognized by external colleagues for their established expertise in their field(s) of study and will have achieved national stature due to the impact of their RSCA, as evidenced by the appropriate measures of their discipline(s) or field(s) of study. Direct teaching responsibilities are often minimal or non-existent, although faculty at this rank may mentor graduate students and postdoctoral researchers as part of their research program. Research Professors may hold leadership positions within their professional community, such as serving on editorial boards or organizing disciplinary conferences, in addition to active service to the profession (e.g., manuscript reviewing, participation in professional societies). Contributions to the university's research infrastructure (e.g., serving on relevant committees) are often expected. As

Term faculty, with or without a terminal degree, who possess the expertise, achievements, and experience to provide professional instruction in a manner that brings relevance and distinction to the local academic unit and the University may be appointed as Professor of Practice.

experienced faculty, they are expected to serve as exemplars of professional, ethical, and collegial conduct.

2.2.2.7 Professor of Practice

Term faculty, with or without a terminal degree, who possess the expertise, achievements, and experience to provide professional instruction in a manner that brings relevance and distinction to the local academic unit and the University may be appointed as Professor of Practice.

2.2.6 Distinguished Service Professor

Distinguished Service Professors are recognized as individuals whose careers have had a major impact on their field or on the university community that goes well beyond ordinary levels of service. Normally, such individuals are recommended by a Dean and appointed by the Provost.

Such appointments are normally reserved for full professors.

The criteria for granting the rank of distinguished service professor includes extraordinary level of impact, sustained contributions to the good of the university and the academic unit, and/or significant contributions to the field that extend beyond the boundaries of the university.

2.2.3 Distinguished Service Professor (honorific title)

Distinguished Service Professors are recognized as individuals whose careers have had a major impact on their field or on the university community that goes well beyond ordinary levels of service. Normally, such individuals are recommended by a Dean and appointed by the Provost.

The criteria for granting the rank of Distinguished Service Professor includes extraordinary level of impact, sustained contributions to the good of the university and the academic unit, and/or significant contributions to the discipline(s) or field(s) that extend beyond the boundaries of the university. Faculty who are granted this honorific title retain their current rank.

2.2.7 Emeritus Faculty

Upon retirement from George Mason University, full-time Associate and Full Professors with ten or more years of continuous academic service may be recommended to the Board of Visitors for election to the honorary rank of Emeritus/Emerita in recognition of outstanding dedication to the university. A letter reviewing the candidate's history of teaching, research and scholarship, and service at Mason is normally initiated by the individual's LAU. The letter is forwarded to the LAU Dean, the Provost and the President for accompanying recommendations.

2.2.4 Emeritus Faculty

Upon retirement from George Mason University, full-time term or tenured Associate Professors and Professors with ten or more years of continuous academic service may be recommended to the Board of Visitors for election to the honorary rank of Emeritus/Emerita in recognition of outstanding dedication to the university. A letter reviewing the candidate's history of teaching, research and scholarship, and service at George Mason is normally initiated by the individual's LAU. The letter is forwarded to the LAU Dean, the Provost, and the President for accompanying recommendations.

2.2.8 Administrators Holding Faculty Rank

Each person appointed to an administrative/professional faculty position is assigned an academic rank. **Initial appointment will normally be at the rank of Instructor. Individuals holding a terminal degree may be appointed at the rank of Assistant Professor. An academic unit and the Provost may together confer academic rank beyond Assistant Professor when appropriate. As exceptions, certain senior administrative positions will be assigned the rank of at least Associate Professor in keeping with the executive status of their position. Assignment of rank must be in accordance with *The Commonwealth of Virginia's Consolidated Salary Authorization for Faculty Positions in Institutions of Higher Education, 2001-2002.* (The assignment of rank to administrative/professional faculty does not confer, nor does time assigned to administrative/professional duties contribute to, tenure.)**

Instructional faculty who are appointed to administrative/professional faculty positions, if tenured, retain their tenured status while so serving.

Faculty who are not tenured have no automatic right to return to their previous instructional, research, or clinical faculty position.

2.2.5 Administrators Holding Faculty Rank

Each person appointed to an Administrative/Professional faculty position is assigned an academic rank. **Faculty rank for Administrative/Professional Faculty is further detailed in the Administrative/Professional Faculty Handbook.**

Instructional faculty who are appointed to Administrative/Professional faculty positions, if tenured, retain their tenured status while so serving.

Faculty who are not tenured have no automatic right to return to their previous instructional, research, or clinical faculty position.

Committee on Reimagining Faculty Roles and Rewards: Introduction & Rationale

Embrace an Integrated, Holistic Framework for Overall Excellence for Faculty

As George Mason University continues its upward trajectory as a public R1 institution with high standards for our student success mission, we must address our outdated definitions of faculty excellence and success. As the CFRR has noted earlier, we have not revised our reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure (RRPT) policies and procedures to account for George Mason's growth as an institution, the changing higher education landscape, or – perhaps most importantly – the known challenges that have been present within our current RRPT framework. Feedback from the broader campus faculty community has indicated that a more integrated approach to assessing excellence and impact is both highly desirable and needed.

Faculty have multiple ways in which they can contribute meaningfully to the university's mission. This could be impactful research, scholarship, and creative activity (RSCA); or impactful work such as focusing on innovative course and curriculum design, teaching, and student success. Other individuals invest their time and effort in significant service and leadership roles that result in impactful work for the university and beyond. While the university needs faculty who are having a positive impact in these variety of ways, current models of evaluation do not incentivize nor capture the richness of varied faculty contributions.

We seek to align our policy language with current practices as well as our aspirational goal of supporting the principle of equifinality – that excellence can be achieved and demonstrated in different ways depending on the faculty member, the context, and the field of study. We recommend an integrated, holistic lens from which to view and recognize impact and *overall excellence*.

Eliminate a Compartmentalized Framework of High Competence and Genuine Excellence

We propose eliminating the compartmentalized framework of “High Competence” versus “Genuine Excellence” in favor of an integrated, holistic framework of *overall excellence*. Not only would this bring us into alignment with the vast majority of our R1 peers, but it would also address some of the challenges of our current framework. These include:

- As we sought and have achieved R1 status, Genuine Excellence in Teaching has been discouraged and therefore rarely used as an option for promotion for tenure-line faculty. In fact, some college/school RRPT guidelines already discourage this and are in conflict with the current Faculty Handbook.
- There is no way to clearly differentiate faculty who deeply invest in their teaching and student outcomes from those who do not. Our goal is to provide guidance and clarity on the importance of recognizing investment in teaching and student success.

The suggested language below aligns our values, current practices, and aspirational goals. Of course, new guidance and criteria for expectations for *overall excellence* and positive impact for both the first-level and second-level reviews would need to be modified to embrace a more holistic and integrative review. Modifications to guidance would need to be made at the university, college/school, and Local Academic Unit (LAU) levels. An appropriate timeline for staged implementation would need to be established.

Update our RRPT Criteria

George Mason has had incredible success as an institution. Today, we are a top 50 public R1 university. We have received the Carnegie Classification of Opportunity Colleges and Universities, with high student access and high student outcomes. However, we have not adapted our reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure (RRPT) policies and procedures to account for George Mason's growth as an institution or the changing higher education landscape. In fact, it has been decades since we revised our institutional RRPT guidance, and faculty roles are more complex than ever before.

The Committee on Faculty Roles and Rewards (CFRR) recommends that George Mason University adopt a forward-thinking approach to defining faculty excellence. We believe that not only is this effort worthwhile, but it is also necessary. We must embrace more contemporary definitions of faculty work as George Mason continues its upward research trajectory and student success mission. We support the principle of equifinality – that excellence can be achieved in different ways depending on the faculty member, the context, and the field of study. The principle of equifinality brings an integrated lens from which to view and recognize faculty accomplishments. We must ensure that our definitions of research, scholarship, and creative activity (RSCA), teaching and student success, and service and leadership recognize the full scope of faculty contributions. We seek to reframe the RRPT process to value more broadly the scope of faculty contributions to their disciplinary communities and fields of study, to student success, and to the continued advancement of George Mason University.

The world of RSCA is dynamic and evolving rapidly. We need to adapt our RRPT language to include recent and emerging forms of scholarship so that our faculty are recognized for their work on the frontiers of knowledge production and translation. Our goal is to empower faculty to craft their RSCA – and provide evidence of its impact – in ways that support the broad and evolving mission of the university. Faculty should be free and indeed encouraged to pursue dynamic, creative, impactful work as they seek to meet the criteria of excellence, broadly defined. There have been national efforts to encourage public universities to reimagine RRPT guidelines. For example, in 2023, the Association for Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) published *Modernizing Scholarship for the Public Good*. The report identified reform of tenure and promotion practices as a key area for strategic action. The call encourages universities to recognize public engagement and public impact research.

Update our Definitions of Faculty Contributions

The sections below propose updated language for RSCA, Teaching and Student Success, and Service and Leadership. The committee believes this language will clarify RRPT evaluation criteria, improve transparency, and enable a comprehensive review of faculty contributions. Collectively, this will help faculty navigate the RRPT (and annual review, per the Faculty Handbook) processes more effectively. This language was informed by a review of 1) the RRPT guidelines for each of George Mason's colleges/schools; 2) national initiatives and reports; and 3) RRPT guidelines at current and aspirational Association of American Universities (AAU) institutions.

2.4 Criteria for Evaluation of Tenured, Tenure-Track, and Term Faculty

Recommendations on changes of faculty status are in large measure a faculty responsibility. The faculty's role in these personnel actions is based upon the essentiality of its judgment to sound educational policy, and upon the fact that scholars in a particular field have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues. An additional reason for the faculty's role in these matters is the general competence of experienced faculty personnel committees with a broader charge that encompasses the evaluation of teaching and service. Implicit in such competence is the acknowledgment that responsibility exists for both adverse and favorable judgments.

Faculty are evaluated when they are candidates for a change in faculty status: reappointment, renewal, promotion, or conferral of tenure ([Section 2.7](#)). Candidates will be evaluated in light of the missions of the University which are teaching; research and scholarship, both theoretical and applied; and service (as defined in [Sections 2.4.1-2.4.3](#)). Only these criteria, as further developed and published by the local academic unit, and approved by the Provost, may be used in evaluations of faculty. Peer review plays a central role in the evaluation of individual achievement in each of these areas. The primary consideration in the evaluation of faculty achievements will be the extent to which these continue to improve the academic quality of the University.

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Faculty are evaluated when they are candidates for a change in faculty status: reappointment, renewal, promotion, or conferral of tenure ([Section 2.7](#)). Candidates will be evaluated in light of the missions of the University which are teaching **and student success**; research, scholarship, **and creative activity**, both theoretical and applied; and service **and leadership** (as defined in [Sections 2.4.1-2.4.3](#)). **All evaluations should consider the candidate's adherence to professional ethics (see [Section 2.10.2](#)).** **For faculty with administrative responsibilities, the impact of those responsibilities should be considered proportional to workload (2.4.4).** Only these criteria, as further developed and published by the local academic unit, and approved by the Provost, may be used in evaluations of faculty. Peer review plays a central role in the evaluation of individual achievement in each of these areas. The primary consideration in the evaluation of faculty achievements will be the extent to which these continue to improve the academic quality of the University.

Faculty are not expected to have equal commitment or equal responsibilities in each of these areas. Levels of expectation will vary with the type of decision.

Initial tenure-track and term appointments will, to some extent, recognize perceived potential rather than achievement. Reappointment, renewal, appointment without term or promotion in rank will be based on achievement rather than potential.

Term faculty candidates for promotion to associate professor or to senior instructor must demonstrate at least high competence in the primary area (instructional, research, or clinical). They must also show evidence of service. The standards that must be met in the primary area and in service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

Term faculty candidates for promotion to professor or to master instructor must demonstrate genuine excellence in the primary area (instructional, research, or clinical). They must also show evidence of continuing service. The standards that must be met in the primary area and in service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

Tenure-track candidates for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor without term must exhibit genuine excellence either in teaching or in research/scholarship. High competence must be exhibited in both areas. Furthermore, candidates must provide evidence that their contributions in their area(s) of genuine excellence have had some significant impact beyond the boundaries of this University. If the primary strength

Faculty are not expected to have equal commitment or equal responsibilities in each of these areas. Levels of expectation will vary with the type of decision.

The standards as outlined below will be developed by the LAU and must comply with Faculty Handbook guidance and are approved by the Provost. Faculty are to be evaluated on the quality and impact of their contributions; evaluations should account for differences in assigned workload and other responsibilities as informed by college/school and LAU policies.

Term Faculty: Term faculty candidates for promotion must demonstrate overall excellence and appropriate impact in the primary area (instructional, research, or clinical). They must also show evidence of contributions to service.

Tenure-Track Faculty: Tenure-track candidates for tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor without term must present a dossier that demonstrates overall excellence in research, scholarship, and creative activities (RSCA) and teaching and student success. With respect to RSCA, candidates must provide evidence that their contributions have had a significant impact on their fields. With respect to teaching and student success, candidates must provide evidence of developing

is teaching, there should be evidence that the candidate's contributions have influence beyond the immediate classroom; if in research/scholarship, there should be evidence that the candidate's contributions have significant influence on colleagues at other institutions in this country, and where applicable, abroad. They must also show evidence of service. The standards that must be met in teaching, research/scholarship, and service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost. Appointment without term should leave no doubt about the candidate's value to the University over an extended period.

Tenured candidates seeking promotion to the rank of professor without term must maintain high competence in teaching, research/scholarship, and service while also maintaining genuine excellence in teaching or research/scholarship. In addition, evidence of significant impact beyond the boundaries of the University must be much more substantial than in cases involving tenure or promotion to the rank of associate professor without term. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of an established external reputation in the primary field, based on consequential achievements in teaching, research and scholarship, or professional activities directly related to teaching and research and scholarship. The standards that must be met in teaching, research/scholarship, and service are developed by the LAU and approved by the Provost.

All evaluations should consider the candidate's adherence to professional ethics (see [Section 2.10.2](#)).

and strengthening their teaching and mentoring skills to facilitate student success. They must also show evidence of contributions to service. Appointment without term should leave no doubt about the candidate's value to the University as a lifetime appointment.

Tenured Faculty: Tenured candidates seeking promotion to the rank of professor without term must maintain a dossier that, taken as a whole, demonstrates overall excellence when considering all three domains of faculty contributions: RSCA, teaching and student success, and service and leadership. Evidence of impact must be much more substantial than in cases involving tenure and/or promotion to the rank of associate professor without term. Clear and convincing evidence must be provided of an established external reputation for overall excellence based on consequential achievements in RSCA, teaching and student success, and/or professional activities directly related to RSCA and teaching and student success.

2.4.1 Teaching

Effective teaching is demonstrated through a combination of course and curricular materials, learning outcomes, assignments, and assessments designed to promote student learning; through review of those materials, outcomes, assignments, and assessments by knowledgeable peers and colleagues; through student evaluations of their learning experiences; and through engaging in professional/teaching development activities.

Examples of contributions to teaching include:

- Development and implementation of new courses, curricula, and programs (face-to-face, online, or hybrid);
- Use of research-based, innovative, inclusive, and/or high-impact teaching and assessment practices;
- Development of instructional materials, including appropriate use of emerging and digital technologies;
- Training and supervision of teaching (graduate) and/or learning (undergraduate) assistants;
- Course coordination for courses with multiple sections;
- Mentoring students, both undergraduate and graduate;
- Clinical and field supervision of students;
- Student academic advising;
- Mentoring faculty colleagues;
- Participating in educational development activities to strengthen knowledge, skills, and/or abilities.

2.4.1 Teaching and Student Success

Contributing effectively to our educational mission is the responsibility of all faculty members. All faculty are expected to:

- Adapt to the evolving needs of students and the workplace in an increasingly complex technological landscape
- Engage in teaching and learning strategies that equitably support and engage students in learning, often informed by evidence-based or research-based teaching and learning strategies rooted in our disciplines and professional communities.

Effective teaching requires the demonstration of an intentional commitment to and refinement of teaching practices that lead to student engagement, learning, and success. In many cases, faculty members will provide leadership for: curricula, including the integration of high-impact practices that foster student success and educational innovations; supporting colleagues in becoming more effective educators; and engaging in activities that have impact beyond one's own classrooms. Effective teaching is typically demonstrated through a combination of:

- Course design, teaching materials, and assessments designed to promote student learning;
- Ongoing review of those materials and assessments by knowledgeable peers and colleagues;
- Student evaluations of/ feedback about their learning experiences; and

- Faculty self-assessments that demonstrate growth, continuous course improvement, and engagement in professional/teaching development activities.

Evidence of impact, significance, and/or innovation may include but are not limited to:

- Development and/or implementation of courses, curricula, and programs across modalities;
- Use of research-based, innovative, inclusive, and/or high-impact teaching and assessment practices;
- Development of instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, case studies, online study guides), including appropriate use of emerging technologies;
- Training and supervision of teaching (graduate) and/or learning (undergraduate) assistants;
- Course coordination, including providing instructor support, for courses with multiple sections;
- Chairing or co-chairing undergraduate or graduate student thesis, portfolio, comprehensive exam, or dissertation committees or other significant student mentoring that leads to student success;
- Clinical and field supervision of students;
- Student academic advising and/or mentoring;
- Mentoring faculty colleagues in course development, design, teaching, digital pedagogy, and/or assessment;
- Participating in professional development activities to strengthen teaching and learning (e.g., workshops, programs, credentials); and
- Leading professional development activities to strengthen teaching and learning (e.g., workshops, programs, credentials).

	<p>Each local academic unit (LAU) must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for demonstrating impact with respect to teaching and student success that reflects the above definitions. Faculty are evaluated on the quality and impact of their contributions; evaluations should account for differences in assigned workload and other responsibilities.</p>
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2.4.2 Research and Scholarship

Scholarly achievement is demonstrated by original contributions to the advancement of the discipline/field of study, or to the integration of the discipline with other fields, or by the application of discipline- or field-based knowledge to the practice of a profession.

Examples of evidence for research and scholarship include:

- Publications (peer and non-peer reviewed), including journal articles, books, book chapters, monographs, etc.;
- Sponsored research activity and grant and contract awards;
- Conference and other scholarly presentations (peer-reviewed and invited);
- Original artistic work, software and media, exhibitions, and professional performances;
- Intellectual property, patents, and evidence of relevant entrepreneurial activities;
- Other evidence indicating scholarly recognition and reputation.

2.4.2 Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA)

Excellence in RSCA builds on a faculty member's academic and/or professional expertise and is demonstrated by original contributions to:

- An individual discipline or field of study;
- Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary knowledge;
- The application or translation of discipline- or field-based knowledge to policy, industry practice, or professional practice;
- The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL); and/or
- Public and community-engaged scholarship.

Evidence of impact, significance, and/or innovation may include but are not limited to:

- Publications (peer and non-peer reviewed), including journal articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, reports, briefs, textbooks, and monographs;
- Original artistic work, software, media, exhibitions, and professional performances;
- Other scholarly works that are single-authored, co-authored, edited, and co-edited;
- Sponsored research activities;
- Academic and professional conference and other scholarly presentations (peer-reviewed and invited);
- Scholarly digital projects, including explicitly Open Educational Resources (OERs),

websites, digital platforms and tools, and multimodal work;

- Intellectual property, patents, and evidence of relevant entrepreneurial activities;
- Professional activities that evidence leadership and/or strength of expertise (e.g., editorships, organizing special sessions/workshops, invitations for activities that make other significant contributions);
- Professional efforts to connect different public constituencies with university scholars (e.g., testifying before legislative bodies, research that informs practices/policies of local/regional/international/other communities, museum exhibits, media interviews or appearances, other activities considered to be the work of public intellectuals);
- Other evidence that indicates scholarly recognition and reputation; and
- Fostering student scholarly identity and success, for example through funding students on RSCA projects, engaging undergraduate or graduate students in RSCA work that leads to co-authorships (e.g., publications, conference proceedings, presentations).

Each local academic unit (LAU) must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for demonstrating impact in RSCA that reflects the above definitions. Emphasis on the quality, significance, and impact of the work, not simply the quantity, is strongly encouraged. Faculty should be encouraged to develop an RSCA portfolio that is forward-thinking and innovative and codifies the legitimacy and expertise of the faculty member in a particular domain.

2.4.3 Service

Service, which may include leadership responsibilities, is demonstrated by faculty participation in governance, and operational or development activities in the local academic unit, the University, or the profession. Required service in the local academic unit includes, but is not limited to, such activity as attendance at faculty meetings and participation in faculty personnel matters and curriculum development. Other examples of service to the LAU include student advising, developing or supporting co-curricular experiences for students, and mentoring colleagues.

Professional service is demonstrated by contributions to recognized societies and associations that promote research and scholarship and by consultancies and cooperative projects that make the faculty member's discipline or field-based knowledge and skills available to individuals, groups or agencies outside the University.

2.4.3 Service and Leadership

Faculty are expected to engage in institutional service, institutional leadership, and/or professional service and leadership. Service and leadership strengthen the institution and faculty professional communities and includes engagement in faculty governance. To show impact, active participation is necessary, but not sufficient.

Institutional service activities include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Participation in faculty personnel matters (e.g., recruitment activities, search committees, RRPT activities);
- Serving on instructional (e.g., accreditation, curricular, Academic Program Review) and research committees at the LAU, college/school, and/or university levels;
- Supporting student success efforts through designing and/or facilitating co-curricular experiences for students, student advising, and/or career coaching;
- Faculty mentoring, such as supporting and advising faculty peers about RSCA or career planning;
- Serving on undergraduate or graduate student thesis or dissertation committees;
- Engagement in community outreach and/or student recruitment activities;
- Coordinating and/or participating in engagement activities (e.g., public lectures/panels, workshops, reading groups, learning communities); and

Leadership is demonstrated by making significant and consequential contributions to the local academic unit, the University, professional societies and associations, and local/regional/national/international communities. Examples include, but are not limited to, chairing or co-chairing committees for the local academic unit; leading and/or actively contributing to university-wide initiatives; serving in leadership roles for professional societies and organizations; serving in significant editorial roles; leading invited or peer-reviewed workshops; leading community-based activities related in some way to expertise; and mentoring faculty colleagues in formal programs.

Each local academic unit must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for institutional and professional leadership and engagement.

- Engaging in professional development opportunities to strengthen leadership capacity.

Institutional leadership involves taking a proactive role in the work of a group/committee/unit to build and sustain important institutional functions that allow the work of the university to mature and progress. Impact may be demonstrated by showing significant, sustained contributions towards implementing strategies that advance the broader institutional mission within the LAU, college/school, and/or George Mason University. These activities include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Chairing or co-chairing committees at the LAU, college/school, and/or university levels;
- Serving as a faculty representative on the Board of Visitors (BOV), the Faculty Senate, university standing committees, ad hoc taskforces and working groups, and other university-wide initiatives;
- Leading or coordinating faculty engagement and mentoring activities (e.g., public lectures/panels, workshops, reading groups, learning communities, mentoring programs);
- Developing and/or implementing new programs and curricula; and
- Enhancing the reputation of George Mason University through special appointments and/or sustained community engagement, outreach, and/or media appearances.

Professional service and leadership are the work of developing the community of scholars within the discipline(s) or field(s) of study. To show impact, active participation is necessary, but not

sufficient. Service and leadership to the profession may include, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- Participation in professional peer-review processes (e.g., RRPT, professional organization conference planning, grant proposal review, manuscript and book review for academic presses and journals);
- Service on and/or leadership for editorial boards, advisory boards, or with scholarly presses;
- Service on and/or leadership for national advisory boards and foundations and/or national review panels;
- Leadership of professional organization standing committees (e.g., organizing panels, developing programs, hosting major conferences);
- Serving on a jury panel for a regional, national, or international professional awards competition or grant review; and
- Participation in professional organization ad-hoc committees.

Each LAU must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for demonstrating impact on institutional and professional service and leadership that reflect the above descriptions. They should also reflect a holistic perspective of contributions that account for where faculty might be in their career lifecycle. Service and leadership expectations should be articulated in workload policies and agreements.

2.4.4. Administrative Responsibilities

Many faculty assume administrative responsibilities as part of their terms of employment. Evaluation of faculty performance of these responsibilities must be included in the annual review and any consideration of change of faculty status. The criteria for successful performance must be given to the faculty member in writing.

2.4.4. Administrative Responsibilities

Many faculty assume administrative responsibilities as part of their terms of employment. Administrative leadership is taking on a role and set of responsibilities that enable the work of a functional unit of the university (e.g., chair, associate chair, program director, graduate or undergraduate director, center director, course coordinator, advisor). These roles fulfill a specific set of responsibilities, are typically designated as fulfilling a defined workload, and are often – but not always – compensated. If a faculty member does not hold an administrative position and/or their contract does not indicate that they hold an administrative role, then they will not be evaluated in this area.

Each college/school and LAU must develop standards to evaluate its expectations for demonstrating impact with respect to administrative responsibilities, as appropriate. The criteria for successful performance must be given to the faculty member in writing. If administrative responsibilities are part of a faculty member's workload, then their administrative impact should be considered in annual reviews and RRPT reviews by the appropriate supervisory structure. Similarly, expectations for impact across all areas of evaluation should be proportionally modified to account for administrative workload in annual reviews and RRPT evaluations.

Summary of revisions for 2.7:

- Replaces references to “department chairs” with “LAU administrators” to more clearly include other titles for similar roles (e.g., department chair, department head, area chair, program director, school director, etc.) throughout the section.
- Revises the first paragraph to overview the roles that each level plays in the RRPT process. The last two sentences could have been seen as restricting independent judgment at some levels, were unclear about who was included as “administration,” and were unclear about what “overturn” would mean in cases with non-unanimous votes.
- Clarifies the steps for the 3rd year renewal process for tenure-line faculty.
- Defines “insufficient” as fewer than three faculty.
- Adds consistency by defining who must recuse themselves from voting for all promotion types and removes the option to vote “abstain” in RRPT processes.
- Updates some process language to account for how our practices work with Interfolio (how external reviews are added, how letters are sent, etc.)
- Specifies for all tenure-line promotions that tenured Associate and Full Professors vote on tenure cases that are a promotion to Associate Professor and that only tenured Full Professors vote on tenure cases that are a Promotion to Full Professor.
- Cleaned up other minor language and punctuation issues.

2.7 Procedures for Reappointment, Renewal, Promotion, and Tenure

Recommendations in these matters originate through faculty action in accordance with established procedures; are reviewed by senior academic administrators; and presented to the Board of Visitors. Peer evaluation of the value of scholarly or educational accomplishments is critical and highly valued in making reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure decisions. LAU Administrators and Deans also play an important role in evaluating scholarly and educational accomplishments, although their evaluation also depends on department, college, and university considerations. The Provost and President review all materials and make a final recommendation to the Board of Visitors, who vote on the final decision. The administration should overturn faculty personnel recommendations rarely, and only when it is clear that peer faculty have not applied appropriate standards, or when the University's long-term programmatic needs are an overriding consideration. Only in extraordinary circumstances and for clearly stated reasons should administrators substitute their own judgment of the value of scholarly or educational accomplishments for judgments made by faculty.

Reappointment, renewal, promotion, and tenure recommendations are based upon an evaluation of performance over the faculty member's total period of service at George Mason University ([Sections 2.4-2.5](#)). Scholarly achievements prior to joining the George Mason University faculty weigh less heavily in these evaluations, but are also considered. These evaluations differ from the annual review ([Section 2.6.1](#)) in their emphasis on lasting contributions, consistency of performance, and flexibility.

The terms "reappoint" or "reappointment" in this Handbook mean offering a term faculty member a contract for an additional term, which may include the same or different duties and responsibilities.

"Renew" or "renewal" in this Handbook means offering a tenure-track faculty member a contract for an additional term on the tenure track, which may include the same or different duties and responsibilities.

Faculty member duties and responsibilities that will be evaluated must be included in the appointment contract. If subsequent contracts or assignment letters are issued, the duties and responsibilities may be changed in consultation with the faculty member.

All faculty who are candidates for a change in appointment status are evaluated by faculty in the local academic unit. The processes and procedures by which they are evaluated are established by the bylaws or standing rules of the LAU and must be consistent with the procedures in this Handbook.

Local academic unit bylaws or standing rules may provide for faculty to participate in evaluation committee meetings electronically, provided the technology used allows all members to hear

each other simultaneously. For all voting that pertains to changes in appointment status, provision must be made for anonymous submission by a written or secure electronic ballot.

Faculty members and administrators may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom they have, or have had, a family or close personal relationship or other conflict of interest (see [Section 2.3.1.1](#)).

2.7.1 Procedures for Reappointment

Term faculty will be evaluated annually for reappointment by following the procedures defined by the local academic unit bylaws or standing rules, which should be consistent with the procedures defined in the Faculty Handbook.

Term faculty on single-year contracts will be evaluated annually, and term faculty on multi-year contracts will be evaluated in the final year of their contract appointment.

Instructors or assistant professors may receive a one, two or three-year reappointment. Senior and master/principal instructors, or associate and full professors may be reappointed to contracts of up to five years. After three single-year appointments, term faculty who meet satisfactory annual performance standards will normally be recommended for a multi-year appointment. Continuing to issue one-year contracts for a faculty member over many years is discouraged.

Term faculty on single-year appointments are evaluated according to the criteria in [Section 2.4](#) and the procedures in [Section 2.5](#). Criteria for reappointment will focus on demonstrated performance in those areas designated in the initial and any subsequent contract letters. The local academic unit recommendation is sent to the Dean. Based on that recommendation and programmatic needs, the Dean will make the decision to reappoint, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the initial contract, or usually no later than 5 months prior to the last day of the term of subsequent contracts.

Term faculty who are on or being recommended for multi-year reappointments are evaluated according to the criteria in [Section 2.4](#) and the procedures in [Section 2.5](#). Criteria for reappointment will focus on demonstrated performance in those areas designated in the initial and any subsequent contract letters. The local academic unit recommendation is sent to the Dean. Based on that recommendation and programmatic needs, the Dean will make recommendations to the Provost whether to reappoint and contract length. If the Dean's recommendation differs from that of the local academic unit, then the Dean should submit a brief justification for a different decision. All multi-year reappointments must be approved by the Provost. Any decision to reappoint a term faculty member who was previously on a multi-year contract to a single-year contract must include a written justification for the change.

Final determination on multi-year appointments for up to three (3) years are made by the Provost. Contract terms greater than three (3) years require the approval of the President or designee. Notification to term instructional faculty members will be sent, in writing, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the term of their initial contracts, and usually no later than 5 months prior to the last day of the term of subsequent contracts. Notification to term

research and term clinical faculty members will be sent, in writing, usually no later than 3 months prior to the last day of the term of their contracts.

2.7.2 Procedures for Renewal

Faculty appointed to a tenure-track position receive an initial three-year term (see [Section 2.1.2](#)). Tenure-track faculty will be evaluated for renewal during the third year of their initial appointment using the following procedure:

1. Tenure-track faculty are evaluated by ~~either~~ the first-level ~~or second-level~~ promotion and tenure committee, ~~the LAU administrator, and the Dean~~ (see [Section 2.7.3](#)) according to the criteria in [Section 2.4](#) and the procedures in [Section 2.5](#). Tenure-track renewals will use the same procedures for review and voting outlined in 2.7.3.2 for these three steps; colleges and schools may also require a second-level committee review if specified in their bylaws.

The Dean will submit a recommendation for renewal or non-renewal to the Provost by March 15th. Based on this evaluation, the Provost will act on the recommendation for renewal or non-renewal by April 15th. Faculty members will be advised of their renewals or non-renewals by May 1st of the third year of their initial appointments. Faculty members receive their renewal contracts no later than May 24th of the evaluation year.

2. If the decision is for renewal, then the faculty member's contract normally will be renewed for three years, and the next full evaluation will be for tenure consideration. Under exceptional circumstances, a faculty member may be renewed for only one year, in which case another evaluation will be conducted the following year. Renewal of a contract resulting from the evaluation in the fourth year of service will be for two years, and the next full evaluation will be for tenure consideration.

3. In the event of non-renewal, the faculty member will be offered a terminal, one-year term appointment following the decision for non-renewal contingent on the faculty member having submitted an appropriate and timely dossier for the purpose of seeking tenure-track contract renewal. Contracts for faculty members who choose not to be evaluated will end on the last day of the term specified in the current contract.

4. If a faculty member is not renewed, the appeal procedure outlined in the Faculty Handbook [Section 2.8](#) may be used.

2.7.3 Promotion and Tenure

The processes for promotion of term and tenured faculty, and tenure for tenure-track faculty are initiated by the local academic unit with the faculty member's concurrence. Self-nomination is also permitted.

2.7.3.1 Procedures for Promotion of Term Faculty

A term faculty member may be considered for promotion, normally after five years of service in the current rank. Term faculty who meet the LAU criteria for promotion may be considered early; however, typical candidates for promotion have a minimum of three years teaching,

research, or clinical work at George Mason University. Promotion may occur within the period of a multi-year contract. Upon promotion, a new contract will be issued ([Section 2.7.1](#)).

Term faculty members will be considered for promotion by a local academic unit committee according to the criteria for evaluation in [Section 2.4](#) and the procedures for evaluation in [Section 2.5](#). Members of the committee are those faculty who are eligible to vote on promotion of term faculty, normally tenured and term faculty above the rank of assistant professor. Term faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on the evaluation committee if there ~~are fewer than three~~ ~~is an insufficient number of~~ eligible or qualified term faculty in the local academic unit. Colleges and schools may elect to include a second level review. The composition of the promotion committee and the procedures used are to be specified in the LAU bylaws or standing rules.

Faculty members and administrators may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom they have, or have had, a family or close personal relationship or other conflict of interest (see Section 2.3.1.1); these faculty will be recorded in the vote as recusals. -All other eligible faculty must vote yes or no; abstentions are not permitted.

The recommendation for promotion is sent from the committee to the Dean. The Dean's recommendation for promotion is due to the Provost by November 1st. By the end of fall semester (no later than December 15th), the Provost will notify the faculty member, in writing, of a decision with accompanying justification, whether or not to recommend promotion.

Term faculty who are promoted will be announced to the Board of Visitors.

Term faculty who are denied promotion are eligible to be considered for promotion in subsequent promotion cycles.

2.7.3.2 Procedures for Promotion and Tenure of Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty

The Provost establishes the annual schedule for promotion and tenure review. Dossiers are to be prepared in accordance with the format provided by the Provost and the Dean. The candidate is responsible for assembling the contents of the dossier. The [LAU local unit](#) administrator is responsible for facilitating the inclusion of ~~inserting the~~ external reference letters into the assembled dossier. Each formal internal evaluation letter is included in the dossier before sending it to the next level of review.

At any time in the promotion/tenure review process before a decision is made by the Provost, a faculty member may withdraw from candidacy by so stating in writing to the Dean and the Provost. After withdrawal from candidacy, there is no further review of the dossier. Candidates who withdraw from the review process in a mandatory decision year for tenure will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next academic year with workload expectations determined by the unit's workload policy as it applies to tenure-track faculty.

If a faculty member is (or is to be) appointed to primary affiliation in more than one local academic unit, a recommendation for promotion and/or tenure may be initiated by any of the units. A separate evaluation leading to a recommendation and decision will be made by each

unit. An action by one local academic unit does not obligate another local academic unit to act similarly. It is required, however, that in each evaluation process the promotion and tenure committee must solicit and consider evaluations from the other units. All evaluations become part of the candidate's dossier.

In all cases of promotion and/or tenure, there are two levels of faculty review. At both levels, evaluations are carried out only by tenured faculty in accordance with [Section 2.4](#) and [Section 2.5](#). In addition to considering the candidate's dossier, faculty committees on promotion and tenure examine and include in the dossier, all relevant written evidence and testimony offered to them by members of the academic community and others with direct knowledge of the candidate's professional qualifications and achievements. Committees may provide in their bylaws or standing rules for faculty to attend meetings using an electronic connection. For all voting pertaining to promotion and tenure, provision must be made for anonymous submission by a written or secure electronic ballot.

Faculty members and administrators may not participate in a review of a candidate with whom they have, or have had, a family or close personal relationship or other conflict of interest (see [Section 2.3.1.1](#)); these faculty will be recorded in the vote as recusals. -All other eligible faculty must vote yes or no; abstentions are not permitted.

The purpose of the first-level review is for the candidate to be evaluated by colleagues who are in the best position to have observed the candidate's performance in teaching and service and who are best able to professionally evaluate the candidate's research/scholarship and publication record. Accordingly, the first-level review is undertaken by faculty in the candidate's local academic unit, which must have published bylaws or standing rules that govern renewal, promotion, and tenure procedures ([Section 1.3.3](#)).

In departmentalized colleges/schools (see [Section 1.3.5](#)), the first level of review is departmental.

In non-departmentalized colleges/schools, which are subdivided into programs or other divisions, the first level of review is carried out by faculty appointed to program(s) or division(s) to which the candidate belongs. Tenured faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on a candidate's first-level review committee if there are fewer than three -is an insufficient number of qualified tenured faculty in the candidate's affiliated program(s)/division(s). Program or division faculties cannot exist solely to make personnel evaluations.

In non-departmentalized colleges/schools, which are not further subdivided, the first-level review is carried out by all eligible tenured faculty in the candidate's college/school. Tenured faculty from other substantively related areas may also serve on a candidate's first-level review committee if there is an insufficient number of are fewer than three eligible or qualified tenured faculty in the college/school. Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to the rank of Professor.

The purpose of the second-level review is to evaluate all the candidates for promotion and/or tenure in the school/college and to make a recommendation to the Dean. The second level of review is carried out by a committee of tenured faculty. The committee members are elected by the college/school in accordance with its bylaws or standing rules ([Section 1.3.3](#)). Associate

Professors and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to the rank of Professor. -The second-level review committee can include members from outside the college/school who are elected in the same manner as other members of the second-level review committee.

At no time shall a faculty member evaluate a candidate at both the first and second levels of review. Faculty eligible for the first level review cannot withhold their participation at the first level to participate in the second level review.

The School of Law is exempt from the provisions specified in the above paragraphs, but it is not exempt from the requirement for two-level peer review.

The procedure for considering promotion and tenure cases is as follows:

1a. Departmental review is initiated by the local first-level promotion and tenure committee, which may be a committee of the whole. The committee communicates the results of its review to the tenured members of the department who then vote. ~~Normally,~~ Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion/tenure to the rank of Professor. ~~Other voting combinations may be specified in the bylaws or standing rules.~~ The ~~department chair~~LAU administrator does not vote with the tenured faculty. The committee transmits the departmental recommendation and accompanying justification, including the division of the vote, to the ~~department chair~~LAU administrator. The ~~department chair~~LAU administrator transmits to the second-level review committee: (1) the candidate's dossier and related materials; (2) the recommendation of the departmental committee with appropriate justifications; and (3) the ~~chair~~LAU administrator's own recommendation and justification, if the ~~chair~~LAU administrator is tenured and, in Professor cases, holds the rank of Professor. If the ~~chair~~LAU administrator is not tenured or at the appropriate rank to make a recommendation, the ~~chair~~LAU administrator submits a summary of the promotion/tenure proceedings. Notification of the recommendation of the local academic unit and copies of the accompanying justifications are sent promptly to the candidate and to the faculty who participated in the deliberations before the dossier is sent to the second-level committee.

The candidate is evaluated by the second-level review committee, which must have published procedures that govern its deliberations. The procedures must include a method for communication between the committee, the candidate, the ~~department chair~~LAU administrator, and the first-level review committee. ~~Normally,~~ Associate Professors and Professors vote on promotion to Associate Professor, and Professors vote on promotion to the rank of Professor. ~~Other voting combinations may be specified in the college/school bylaws or standing rules.~~

The committee submits its recommendation ~~forwards its recommendation along with all preceding reports and recommendations~~ to the Dean. Notification of the recommendation of the second-level review committee is sent to the faculty who participated in the deliberations at the first level of review and to the candidate and LAU administrator. ~~Copies of the statement of justification are sent promptly to the candidate and the department chair.~~

~~If the second-level review committee's recommendation differs from that of the first-level review committee, the second-level review committee's recommendation and accompanying justification are sent to the first-level review committee.~~

1b. The process is analogous in non-departmentalized units, except that the role assigned to ~~department chairs~~ the LAU administrator is omitted.

2. All materials are reviewed by the Dean of the candidate's college/school. The dossier and the recommendation of the Dean are forwarded to the Provost. Notification of the recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review and a copy of the accompanying justification is promptly sent to the candidate and the local unit administrator (the latter copy to be retained in the candidate's permanent file).

If the Dean's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in the recommendation, which is sent to the candidate, to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process, and to the Provost.

3. The complete dossier is reviewed by the Provost. The Provost may consult with other academic administrators who have direct knowledge of one or more aspects of the candidate's professional performance. The Provost makes a recommendation as to whether promotion or tenure should be granted. Notification of the Provost's recommendation is sent to the faculty bodies who participated in deliberations at the first and second levels of review, and a copy of the accompanying justification is sent to the Dean, the candidate and the local unit administrator. The justification shall be retained in the candidate's personnel file.

If the Provost's recommendation is different from that received from the second-level review committee, the reasons for that difference should be specified in writing and sent to the candidate and to the faculty bodies participating in the decision-making process.

4. If the Provost recommends tenure or promotion be granted, the candidate's dossier, with all previously generated recommendations, is forwarded to the President. If the Provost recommends tenure or promotion not be granted, the recommendation is not forwarded to the President.

5. The President makes a recommendation as to whether tenure or promotion should be granted. If the President recommends tenure or promotion be granted, such recommendation is forwarded to the Board of Visitors. If the President recommends tenure or promotion not be granted, the recommendation is not forwarded to the Board of Visitors.

6. Tenure, and promotion to the rank of associate professor or professor for tenured faculty, can only be conferred by the Board of Visitors. If the Board of Visitors decides to grant promotion or tenure, the candidate will be notified in writing by the Secretary of the Board of Visitors.

7. If either the Provost or the President recommends that tenure or promotion not be granted, the candidate will be notified of the decision on or before May 1. Upon receiving notice of the Provost's or President's decision, the candidate may:

- a. accept the decision; or
- b. appeal the decision according to the procedure described in [Section 2.8](#).

In the event tenure is not granted in a faculty member's final year on the tenure-track, the faculty member will be offered a one-year terminal appointment for the next academic year with workload expectations determined by the unit's workload policy as it applies to tenure-track faculty.

8. Tenure and promotion are never granted by default.

2.7.4 Tenure-Track Contract Extension

Extension of a tenure-track contract is granted when circumstances arise that may interfere substantially with a faculty member's ability to pursue their professional responsibilities (teaching, research/scholarship, service) while on the tenure track. At the time of tenure consideration, a faculty member who has received an extension or extensions will be considered using the same tenure criteria as those applied to other faculty in the college/school.

Length and frequency

Tenure-track contract extensions are granted in one-year increments. Two extensions are normally the maximum that will be granted for any combination of circumstances. The Provost may approve exceptions to this limit. However, in no case will a candidate receive more than three extensions. Tenure-track study leaves are independent of these extensions, but should generally not immediately follow a tenure-track contract extension.

Procedure for request and approval

The faculty member's request, in writing, to the local academic unit head must clearly state the circumstances that justify an extension of the tenure-track contract. The recommendation of the local academic unit head is forwarded to the Dean, if applicable, who forwards a recommendation to the Provost for final approval.

Medically-related extensions will correspond with the [Department of Labor Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#), [University Policy 2215](#) (Family Medical Leave), [University Policy 2230](#) (Faculty Paid Parental Leave), [University Policy 2232](#) (Sick Leave Policy for Faculty under the Traditional Sick Leave Plan), and/or [the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program \(VSDP\)](#).

Circumstances

1. The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child

A faculty member who becomes a parent should request the tenure-track contract extension within one year of the child's arrival in the family and prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made. Multiple births or

multiple adoptions at the same time result in the same one-year extension as single births or adoptions.

2. Serious health condition

A tenure-track contract extension may be requested based on a serious personal health condition or a serious health condition of a member of the faculty member's immediate family. A serious personal health condition or serious health condition within the immediate family will be defined according to the FMLA criteria for family and medical leave. Human Resources must receive written certification by the primary treating physician. The request for extension must be made within three months of Human Resources & Payroll's certification of family and medical leave.

3. Military Service

In accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), a tenure-track faculty member who is also a member of the U.S. military and is called to active duty will be granted a tenure-track contract extension. The extension will last for the duration of the active duty assignment, rounded to the nearest year, but will not exceed the extension period provided by USERRA. For example, an active duty assignment lasting between 4 through 15 months will earn a one-year extension, 16 through 27 months will earn a two-year extension. The faculty member should make the request as early as possible before entering active duty and prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made.

4. Other Extraordinary Circumstances

Tenure-track faculty members who engage in important public or University service may request a tenure-track contract extension. The request should be made prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made. If there are circumstances beyond the faculty member's control that prevent them from fulfilling the professional responsibilities required for tenure consideration, the faculty member may request a tenure-track contract extension. The request should be made prior to August 25th of the academic year in which the tenure decision would have been made.

Rationale for revisions: We have replaced the Honor Code with the Academic Standards Code, so this updated language brings the handbook in alignment with current policy.

2.10.5 Faculty Responsibility Under the ~~Honor~~ Academic Standards Code

~~Since the founding of the University, the Honor Code has been and remains a part of the educational process at George Mason. Although the students are primarily responsible for preserving and enforcing the code, the faculty share common interests with the students in matters of academic integrity.~~

The Academic Standards Code affirms our collective commitment to foster an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence at George Mason University. Faculty are expected to adhere to the Academic Standards Code and to apply the highest ethical standards in teaching, research, and scholarship.

~~Faculty are expected to have a strong commitment to the Honor Code, and to support and to encourage students in their pursuit of its goals.~~