

SRSU Policy: Appointment of Faculty to Academic Ranks

SRSU Policy ID: FH 2.04 Policy

Reviewed by: Executive Vice President and Provost

Approval Authority: President of the University

Approval Date: January 29, 2026

Next Review Date: January 29, 2031

The initial appointment of a faculty member to an academic rank will adhere to the following criteria:

A. Faculty Ranks

Tenure and Tenure-Track Eligibility Policy

1. **Policy Statement:**

Residential faculty are eligible to hold tenure or tenure-track positions at the University. Only in Rare cases will a non-residential faculty be eligible for tenure or a tenure track position. Exceptions must be approved by the Provost and President.

2. **Definition:**

For the purposes of this policy, *residential faculty* are defined as faculty members who spend a minimum of sixty percent (60%) of their professional time on campus, as outlined in Faculty Handbook 2.39.

3. **Policy:**

Faculty members who are fully remote are not eligible to hold tenure-track or tenured appointments, except in rare circumstances and with the approval of the Provost and President. However, fully remote faculty who possess the appropriate academic credentials and qualifications may be appointed to a faculty rank (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor) in a non-tenure-track capacity.

Tenured, Tenure-Track or Non-Tenured Appointments

4. **Professor**

The earned terminal degree in one's field or equivalent, a minimum of five years at the rank of associate professor, and a minimum of ten years' teaching experience at the college or university level or the equivalent as defined by the academic department are required. In addition, faculty considered for this rank must demonstrate teaching excellence, dedication to and growth in the profession, scholarship or performing artistry, and the requirements of section 2.04 for promotion to this rank. This is a tenured or non-tenured appointment.

5. **Associate Professor**

The earned terminal degree in one's field or equivalent and a minimum of five years at the rank of assistant professor. In addition, faculty considered for this rank must demonstrate teaching excellence, dedication to and growth in the profession, scholarship or performing artistry, and

the requirements of section 2.04 for promotion to this rank are required. This is a tenure-track, tenured, or non-tenured appointment.

6. **Assistant Professor**

The earned terminal degree in one's field or equivalent is required for appointment to the rank of assistant professor. This is a tenure-track or non-tenured appointment.

Non-Tenure-Track Appointments

7. **Visiting Assistant Professor**

Earned terminal degree or equivalent in one's field, or ABD at the time of appointment. The appointment is for the term of one year, renewable for three additional successive one-year terms, a total of four years, as determined at the time of initial appointment. This is a non-tenure-track appointment.

8. **Instructor**

The master's degree with a minimum of eighteen semester credit hours in the appropriate teaching field is required for appointment to the rank of instructor. This is a non-tenure-track appointment.

9. **Professor of Practice**

This fixed term rank is appropriate for a field-specific expert whose contribution to teaching, clinicals, research, or service upon joining the University community has its foundation in a prior career of non-academic achievement. It is not appropriate to employ the rank distinctions "associate" or "assistant" with this appointment. However, if the appointing unit internally employs field identifiers in tenure track appointments (e.g., professor of management), it is appropriate to employ those identifiers with this rank.

10. **Distinguished Professor of Practice**

This fixed-term rank is appropriate for a field-specific expert whose contributions to teaching, clinicals, research, or service are grounded in a prior career of *exceptionally distinguished* non-academic achievement and national or international recognition. Appointment to this rank reflects a record of sustained professional impact, leadership, and distinction that brings significant value to the University community. It is not appropriate to employ the rank distinctions "associate" or "assistant" with this appointment. However, if the appointing unit internally employs field identifiers in tenure-track appointments (e.g., professor of management), it is appropriate to use those identifiers with this rank.

11. **Clinical Assistant Professor**

The rank of Clinical Assistant Professor is a non-tenure-track, fixed-term appointment intended for faculty whose primary responsibilities are clinical instruction, supervision, practice-based teaching, and service related to professional preparation.

Appointment to this rank requires an earned terminal degree or

appropriate professional degree in the discipline, or documented terminal-degree equivalency based on substantial professional practice and credentials. Candidates are expected to demonstrate effectiveness in clinical teaching, student mentoring, and the application of evidence-based practice in professional settings.

Appointments are typically made for a one-year term and may be renewed annually, consistent with institutional policy and programmatic need.

12. **Clinical Associate Professor**

The rank of Clinical Associate Professor is a non-tenure-track, fixed-term appointment for faculty who have demonstrated sustained excellence in clinical teaching, professional practice, and service to the program, profession, or community.

Appointment or promotion to this rank requires an earned terminal degree or approved terminal-degree equivalency, along with a record of progressive responsibility in clinical education, supervision, or leadership within professional practice settings. Candidates are expected to show continued growth in teaching effectiveness, contributions to curriculum development, and meaningful engagement in service activities relevant to Health Sciences disciplines.

Appointments are made for a fixed term, renewable in accordance with institutional guidelines.

13. **Clinical Professor**

The rank of Clinical Professor is the highest non-tenure-track clinical appointment and is reserved for faculty who have achieved distinction in clinical teaching, professional practice, leadership, and service.

Appointment or promotion to this rank requires an earned terminal degree or approved terminal-degree equivalency and a sustained record of excellence and impact in clinical education, professional leadership, program development, or discipline-specific service. Individuals at this rank are expected to provide leadership in curriculum, mentoring of faculty and students, accreditation or regulatory activities, and advancement of best practices within their field.

Appointments are fixed-term and renewable, subject to institutional policy and demonstrated continued contribution.

14. **Lecturer**

The rank of lecturer is for a part-time, temporary, non-tenure-track position, implying no obligation beyond the semester appointment as specified on the Temporary Employment Form.

B. Terminal Degree Equivalency

In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and

demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented in lieu of formal academic preparation. Such cases must be documented and justified in writing by the appropriate departmental chair, school dean, and the executive vice president and provost. Such documentation and justification will be part of the individual's permanent file.

C. General Qualifications and Criteria for Promotion and Tenure

Promotion from one rank to another does not automatically occur when an individual's level of education and experience meet the minimum requirements. Promotion and tenure are based on the requirements for each rank, general qualifications and criteria, and the recommendations of the appropriate university officials as outlined in the policy statement. The qualifications and criteria for promotion and tenure are as follows:

1. Effective Teaching

The primary criterion for promotion and tenure at Sul Ross State University is effective teaching as evidenced by the annual evaluation process. During the year that a faculty member has applied for promotion and tenure, both the dean and the department chairperson shall observe and evaluate the applicant's classroom teaching. The faculty member shall decide whether the observation is an actual visit to the classroom or based upon a video of the classroom activity. If the video alternative is chosen, then it is the responsibility of the faculty member to make all of the arrangements for the videotaping.

2. Demonstrated scholarship and/or performing artistry.

3. Demonstrated ability to stay current in the appropriate academic field and to communicate knowledge in that field.

4. Cooperation with faculty, staff, and administration in fulfilling the mission of the university.

5. Productive service in university organizations such as faculty councils, university committees, student life, and honor societies.

6. Contributions to professional organizations in the appropriate academic field.

7. Active community service outside the university.

8. Please see [FH 2.08](#) for faculty tracks information.

D. Procedure for Promotion and Tenure Recommendations

1. Deadlines.

The University Promotion and Tenure Council shall establish the deadline for each stage of the tenure and promotion-review procedure in the spring semester for the following academic year. These dates shall be included in the university's administrative calendar and announced at the first meeting of the Faculty Assembly and Faculty Senate in the fall semester.

2. Fall Semester Notice from the Executive Vice President and Provost.

At the start of the fall semester, the executive vice president and provost shall review the institutional needs to determine the number of promotions for each of the faculty ranks. The provost shall inform the chairperson of the University Promotion and Tenure Review Council of the number of promotions available, and the chairpersons shall announce this number at the first meeting of the Faculty Assembly and Senate in the fall semester.

3. Application.

Faculty members must submit an application for promotion to the department chairperson by the second Friday in October.

4. Contents of the Application for Promotion.

The promotion application shall include the official application for promotion (see Appendix), a letter of application for promotion, a copy of the applicant's initial letter of appointment, a copy of the current *curriculum vita*, copies of the department chairperson's annual evaluations for the most recent three years, and summary sheets of the student course evaluations for the most recent three years. All recommendations from each level of the promotion and tenure review shall also be added to the promotion and tenure application as the application moves through the review procedure. Narrative explanations must be provided regardless of a positive or negative decision at any level. Narratives must be forwarded and compiled throughout the process and provided to the applicant within two weeks of completion of the promotion and tenure review procedure. At all stages of the procedure, the candidate must be informed of the membership of all assessing committees. Such information must also be included in all narratives pertaining to the application.

The application may also include other evidence of contributions to the fulfillment of the university's mission statement and the applicant's commitment to teaching and scholarship such as books, reprints or preprints of articles, scripts, scores, and performance programs, as well as other scholarly work appropriate to the discipline.

It is the individual faculty member's responsibility to provide full documentation of the application. Faculty members who fail to adequately document their application may not append additional information after the review process has begun and may be denied promotion based upon insufficient documentation. Such denial shall not prejudice consideration during future promotion consideration.

5. Department.

The department chairperson shall convene the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee to consider all applications for promotion in the department. This committee shall consist of the tenured faculty in the department. If there are fewer than three persons from the applicant's department or program qualified to serve on the departmental reviewing committee, a number of faculty members from outside the department sufficient to compose a departmental committee of three will be selected randomly by the dean of the academic college. Faculty members qualified to be chosen for membership on the departmental committee are faculty members with tenure within the college with the rank of associate professor or professor. The applicant and the department chair may each veto the selection of one committee nominee chosen through the random-selection process; however, if there is no department chair or if the chair is the applicant, the dean of the college and the applicant may each veto one nominee.

The committee shall elect its own chairperson. Faculty members may not serve on the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee during the year in which they are being considered for promotion. The committee shall vote "for" or "against" promotion and shall rank all applicants within each academic rank. The committee will provide a narrative explaining the applicant's strengths and weaknesses in the areas relevant to promotion and tenure.

The committee shall forward its recommendations and written justifications to the department chairperson. The department chairperson shall make a recommendation. The chairperson shall forward the complete application for promotion to the dean of the college by the second Friday in November. If the department chairperson is applying for promotion, then the Department Promotion Committee shall forward the candidate's promotion application directly to the dean by the above date.

6. College.

The dean shall convene the College Promotion and Tenure Committee by the second Friday in December and provide all applications for promotion. The College Promotion Committee shall include the chairpersons from the various department promotion committees within the college. The College

Promotion Committee shall elect its own chairperson. The committee shall review each application for promotion and vote "for" or "against" promotion for each applicant and rank all applicants within each academic rank. The committee will provide a narrative explaining the applicant's strengths and weaknesses in the areas relevant to promotion and tenure. When the college review is complete, the committee shall forward the applications with recommendations and rationales to the dean.

7. Dean.

The dean shall make a recommendation and forward all applications for promotion to the chairperson of the University Promotion and Tenure Council by the second Friday in February.

8. University Review.

The promotion and tenure recommendations from each dean shall be transmitted to the University Promotion and Tenure Council. The University Promotion and Tenure Council shall be comprised of nine tenured faculty members with the rank of professor from the Alpine and the Rio Grande College campuses. Two-thirds of the membership shall be from the Alpine campus and one-third from the Rio Grande College campuses. The membership of the University Promotion and Tenure Council shall be appointed by the presiding officers of the SRSU faculty governance. The council chair will be elected by the council membership.

The University Promotion and Tenure Council shall review each application for tenure and promotion and vote "for" or "against" tenure or promotion for each applicant and rank all applicants within each academic rank. When the university review is complete, the council shall forward the applications to the vice president and provost for Academic Affairs by the first Friday in April. The council will provide a narrative explaining the applicant's strengths and weaknesses in the areas relevant to promotion and tenure.

9. Executive Vice President and Provost.

The executive vice president and provost shall review all applications for promotion and tenure and recommend either "for" or "against" promotion and tenure for each applicant and then rank all applicants within each academic rank. The executive vice president and provost shall forward these recommendations to the president of the university by the last

Friday in April. The executive vice president and provost shall notify the applicants of these recommendations and include a narrative explaining each applicant's strengths and weaknesses in the areas relevant to promotion and tenure.

10. President.

The president shall review all applications for promotion and tenure, even those that did not come forward with the recommendation of the executive vice president and provost, and determine which promotions and tenure to recommend to the board of regents at their May meeting. The president shall notify all applicants, department chairpersons, deans, the chairperson of the University Promotion and Tenure Council, and the executive vice president and provost of these recommendations. Following action by the board of regents, the president shall give written notice to each applicant of the promotions and tenure actions taken by the board.

E. Special Considerations

1. Withdrawing an application.

An applicant may withdraw an application for promotion and tenure at any time in the review process.

2. Hearing Conditions.

A faculty member shall not be entitled to a statement of reasons for denial of promotion beyond the rationales provided throughout the process or to a hearing to review or appeal such denial, unless he or she submits in writing to the president factual allegations that the denial constitutes a violation of a right guaranteed by the laws or Constitution of the State of Texas or of the United States and requests an administrative hearing to review these allegations. The allegations shall be heard under the same procedures as in the case of dismissal for cause (Chapter V, Subsection 4.44 of the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*) with the exceptions applicable to non-tenured faculty who are not reappointed (Chapter V, Subsection 4.28).

F. Return of Applications

When the review procedure is complete, the executive vice president and provost shall retain all applications for retrieval by all applicants.