

Tennessee Technological University
Policy No. 206



Effective Date: July 1, 2018

Policy No: 206

Policy Name: Faculty Promotion

I. Purpose

Promotion in academic rank is recognition of past achievement of the faculty member being considered for promotion. In addition, promotion in rank is usually recognition of future potential and a sign of confidence that the individual is capable of greater accomplishments and of assuming greater responsibilities. It is the policy of Tennessee Technological University to make promotions primarily on considerations of merit, tempered by considerations of institutional mission and fiscal responsibility. In maintaining this policy, promotions are made objectively, equitably, impartially, and as recognition of merit in accordance with the criteria contained in this policy.

II. Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Provost, with recommendations for revision reviewed by the Faculty Senate and approved by the Academic Council, Administrative Council, and University Assembly.

III. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, service/outreach, peers and non-peers will be defined as follows:

A. Teaching

Teaching applies to any strategy in which information is imparted so that others may learn, and may include, but is not limited to, a variety of techniques including instruction, mentoring, development of course materials or courseware, and development of innovative approaches to instruction.

B. Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity

Research/scholarship/creative activity applies to the studious inquiry, examination, or discovery that contributes to disciplinary and interdisciplinary bodies of knowledge. Research/scholarship/creative activity may include, but is not limited to, disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities that focus on the boundaries of knowledge, field-based scholarship, creative activities (e.g., film-making, performances, or other artistic creations), and the development of innovative approaches to teaching (pedagogical research).

C. Service/Outreach

Service/outreach applies to involvement within the community as defined by Tennessee Tech's role and mission, service to Tennessee Tech, and service within the bounds of the applicant's academic discipline and budgeted assignment.

D. Peers – Faculty of the same or higher rank as sought for by a candidate for promotion.

E. Non-Peers – Faculty of the same or lower rank of a candidate being considered for promotion.

A more detailed description of these activities and the criteria to be applied in assessing performance in these three areas may be found in Section VI of the Tennessee Technological University Policy 205 – Academic Tenure and in Section VIII of this policy on Faculty Promotion.

IV. Evaluation Process

The evaluation process utilized by Tennessee Technological University can be found in the Promotion Procedures and Forms link in the Faculty Handbook located on the Provost's website under Faculty Information.

V. Academic Ranks

The importance of the criteria for a recommendation for appointment to or promotion in academic rank depend upon the nature, mission, and goals of Tennessee Tech and of the academic department/unit in which the candidate is to obtain appointment or promotion. Recommendations for appointment or promotion, subject to the requirements of this policy, shall devolve from the professional judgment of the peers in the academic department/unit in which the candidate is to obtain appointment or promotion, those departmental/unit peers acting as that segment of the wider community of scholars best qualified to evaluate the potential or actual performance of the candidate in the exercise of his/her professional responsibilities.

All full-time faculty members are expected to engage in teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and service/outreach, but not all are expected to engage in each activity to the same degree. The mission statement of Tennessee Technological University clearly accords the highest priority to teaching, followed by research/scholarship/creative activity and service/outreach, in that order. However, there is a wide variation in individual academic unit missions and priorities. Even within units, faculty assignments may vary substantially with workload assignments and considerations of faculty abilities, interests, and University needs. Because individual priorities, workloads, the level and quality of support services and facilities, disciplinary characteristics,

and faculty capabilities and interests are all subject to wide variation within Tennessee Tech, an effective system for evaluating potential or performance must be based upon the professional judgment of the faculty members in the candidate's academic department/unit.

The departmental/unit peers shall evaluate the appropriateness of the candidate's training, degrees, and prior professional experience. Equivalent prior professional experience may include relevant instructional experience, experience as an administrator, counselor, librarian, or the like. In evaluating prior professional experience, the President shall determine, upon the recommendation of the departmental/unit peers, whether prior service at another institution shall be accepted entirely, or shall be discounted in whole or in part.

The following are criteria that distinguish between academic tenurable ranks:

A. Instructor

1. Evidence of potential ability in teaching and/or research/scholarship/creative activity and/or service/outreach.
2. Minimum of a Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

B. Senior Instructor

1. Documented evidence of ability in teaching and/or research/scholarship/creative activity and/or service/outreach.
2. Completion of five full academic years at the rank of instructor at the end of the academic year during which the faculty member is applying for promotion to senior instructor.
3. Documented evidence of high quality professional productivity which may lead to national recognition in the academic discipline, and/or consonant with the goals of Tennessee Tech and of the academic unit to which the faculty member belongs.
4. Minimum of a Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
5. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

C. Master Instructor

1. Documented evidence of teaching excellence and superior contribution to student development or superior scholarly or creative activity will contribute to the positive record of the candidate for advancement to the rank of Master Instructor. Since there is no higher rank as an Instructor, promotion to Master Instructor is taken with great care and requires a level of achievement beyond that required for Senior Instructor. This rank is not a reward for long service; rather it is recognition of superior achievement within the discipline with every expectation of continuing contribution to Tennessee Tech and the larger academic community.
2. Completion of five full academic years at the rank of senior instructor at the end of the academic year during which the faculty member is applying for promotion to master instructor.
3. Documented evidence of sustained high quality professional productivity and national recognition in the academic discipline or sustained high quality professional productivity in the academic discipline that is consonant with the goals of Tennessee Tech and of the academic unit to which the faculty member belongs.
4. Minimum of a Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
5. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

D. Assistant Professor

1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
2. Evidence of potential ability in teaching and/or research/scholarship/creative activity and/or service/outreach.
3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

E. Associate Professor

1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related field.
2. Completion of five full academic years at the rank of assistant professor at the end of the academic year during which the faculty member is applying for promotion to associate professor.

3. Documented evidence of ability in teaching and/or research/scholarship/creative activity and/or service/outreach.
4. Documented evidence of high quality professional activity which may lead to national recognition in the academic discipline, and/or professional activity consonant with the goals of Tennessee Tech and of the academic department/unit to which the faculty member belongs.
5. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

F. Professor

1. Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related field.
2. Completion of five full academic years at the rank of associate professor at the end of the academic year during which the faculty member is applying for promotion to full professor.
3. Documented evidence of teaching excellence and superior contribution to student development or superior research/scholarship/creative activity will contribute to the positive record of the candidate for advancement to the rank of professor. Since there is no higher rank, promotion to professor is taken with great care and requires a level of achievement beyond that required for associate professor. Promotion to professor is not a reward for longevity; more exactly it is recognition of superior achievement within the discipline with every expectation of continuing contribution to Tennessee Tech and the larger academic community.
4. Documented evidence of sustained high quality professional productivity and national recognition in the academic discipline or sustained high quality professional productivity in the academic discipline that is consonant with the goals of Tennessee Tech and of the academic department/unit to which the faculty member belongs.
5. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, professional integrity, and a high degree of academic maturity and responsibility.

The following are criteria that distinguish between academic non-tenurable ranks:

G. Lecturer

1. Demonstrated ability in instruction and student development (defined below).

2. Minimum of a Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
3. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

H. Senior Lecturer

1. Documented evidence of high quality teaching and contribution to student development.
2. Completion of five full academic years at the rank of lecturer at the end of the academic year during which the faculty member is applying for promotion to senior lecturer.
3. Minimum of a Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
4. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, and professional integrity.

I. Master Lecturer

1. Documented evidence of teaching excellence and superior contribution to student development.
2. Completion of five full academic years at the rank of senior lecturer at the end of the academic year during which the faculty member is applying for promotion to master lecturer.
3. Minimum of a Master's degree from an accredited institution in the instructional discipline or related area.
4. Evidence of good character, mature attitude, professional integrity, and a high degree of academic maturity and responsibility.

Student Development: Development of values, identity, and sense of self and purpose which can be accomplished through acquisition of knowledge, student organization involvement, service-learning, and undergraduate research, as well as discussions of the moral dilemmas in a chosen profession. Proper student development occurs in a creative supportive environment both inside and outside the classroom and fosters holistic student growth.

Those who hold rank as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, or Master Lecturer are those whose responsibilities primarily involve teaching, however, in some cases, these faculty may have minor responsibilities in research/scholarship/creative activities and/or service/outreach. Lecturers are not eligible for tenure.

VI. Exceptions to Minimum Rank Qualifications

The minimum rank qualifications should be met in every recommendation regarding appointment to academic rank and for promotion in academic rank. Exceptions to the minimum rank qualifications can be recommended by the departmental/unit peers and by the President of Tennessee Tech; however, such exceptions are not favored and should be granted only upon a showing of a candidate's exceptional merit and/or other extraordinary circumstances, such as an objective need to deviate from these minimum qualifications in filling positions and/or retaining otherwise qualified faculty within certain academic disciplines.

Petitions for exceptions to promotional criteria may include consideration of the appropriateness of the degree or extraordinary qualities that the candidate may possess. The equivalent work experience credit may include relevant teaching experience or other experiences such as experience gained as an administrator, counselor, librarian, or the like. When evaluating college level instruction, research/scholarship/creative activities, and service/outreach, Tennessee Tech may make its own determination whether or not the number of years of experience from another university is to be accepted in total or discounted in some manner.

VII. Terminal Degree Designation

Tennessee Tech uses national discipline standards to determine which degrees are considered to be “terminal” within a discipline. The Provost may request the President to grant blanket exceptions to these standards by classification based upon Tennessee Tech’s mission and hiring practice. The Provost may also petition the President for “equivalent work experience credit” when a candidate has not obtained a terminal degree, but has a record of extraordinary achievement in a given field. The equivalent work experience credit may include relevant teaching experience or other related experiences.

Degrees considered terminal by Tennessee Tech include:
Doctorates:

- Ph.D.
- Ed.D.
- D.A.
- D.M.A.

Masters:

- M.F.A. (Studio Art, Creative Writing)
- M.L.S. (Master's in Library Science)
- M.M. (Certain specialties in music)
- Master's of Engineering or Master's with major in Engineering (Engineering Technology, University Level)

NOTE: National practice does not recognize the J.D. as a doctorate.

VIII. Promotion Criteria

All full-time faculty members are expected to engage in teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and service/outreach, but not all are expected to engage in each activity to the same degree nor is each individual expected to be engaged in all aspects of each activity. It must further be noted that some overlap among these related activities is to be expected. The departmental/unit peers have the primary responsibility for evaluating the quality of faculty performance relative to appointment to or promotion in academic rank.

The following descriptions of these professional activities shall be used as general guidelines in evaluating a candidate's potential (in cases of appointment) or performance (in cases of promotion).

A. Teaching

Teaching may consist of a combination of the following professional activities:

1. Classroom, on-line, and laboratory teaching of credit courses and seminars, including preparation and delivery of lectures, conduct of classes, supervising laboratory work, evaluation of students, and conferences with students regarding coursework. This activity may be conducted on a team basis.
2. Individual instruction, including (a) directed individual studies, i.e., credit instruction on an informal individual basis; (b) private lessons, e.g., private music lessons; (c) supervision of student interns, such as students enrolled in a practicum, practice teaching, or work experience courses, and cooperative education students, including evaluation of student progress, conduct of seminars and critique sessions, and counseling of students; (d) thesis and dissertation supervision, including service as a member or chair of graduate committees; and (e) clinical teaching, as in a health-related field.
3. Academic advisement, including informal counseling with students on academic course or program selection and scheduling, and other matters related to academic progress.
4. Course materials, curriculum, and teaching methodology development, such as development of new approaches, improvement of teaching materials, experimentation with teaching methodologies and assessment methods, and development of structure, content, and sequence of courses.

5. Non-credit instruction in professional non-credit continuing education programs and development of professional instruction programs, which may be on an assigned or overload basis.
6. For librarians, instruction is to be equated with the performance of professional library responsibilities.
7. Faculty development, i.e., formal and informal activities primarily directed to maintaining and enhancing faculty teaching capabilities.

B. Research/Scholarship/Creative Activity

Research/scholarship/creative activity includes those professional activities designed to discover, create, or disseminate greater knowledge, appreciation, or understanding of an academic discipline, including, but not limited to:

1. Pure research: seeking new knowledge, investigating realms not covered by current understanding or challenging current understanding.
2. Applied research: the application of known methods or theories to specific circumstances.
3. Pedagogical research: the development of pedagogical techniques and the application in the classroom or laboratory, which furthers the dissemination of knowledge.
4. Artistic creativity and performance: the creation and exhibition of works of art or crafts, or the composition and/or performance of plays, music, etc.
5. Faculty development: formal and informal activities primarily directed to maintain and enhance faculty research, scholarship, or creative capabilities or performance.

Evaluation of the candidate's research/scholarship/creative activity should stress the quality of the documented work, and should be based on the professional judgment of peers in the discipline. Documentation of these activities should manifest ability in the candidate's discipline. Some methods of documenting this evaluation include, but are not limited to, publication of articles in refereed journals, publication of books by recognized presses, proprietary research, production of juried artistic works, presentation of refereed papers at professional meetings, obtaining competitive grants from professional agencies, or similar means.

C. Service/Outreach

Service/outreach includes those activities undertaken in service to the community, Tennessee Tech, the higher education profession as a whole, and the faculty member's academic discipline, including:

1. Service to students unrelated to credit instruction, such as sponsoring student organizations and extracurricular activities, and non-assigned tutorial instruction to enhance the academic skills of students.
2. Service to Tennessee Tech, such as service on departmental, college, and University committees, assignments involving student recruitment, institutional development, public relations, and consultation with University offices.
3. Service to scholarly and professional organizations, including participation in such organizations as a member, officer, or committee member, as a member of an editorial board of a scholarly or professional organization, or service to accrediting organizations and agencies.
4. Service to the community, industry, or government, including (a) professional service, i.e., service directly related to the professional expertise of the faculty member, including consulting activities whether for compensation or not; and (b) other contributions to the cultural environment of the community, such as service as an officer or member of boards or committees, service to non-profit charitable organizations, or to governmental agencies.
5. Faculty development, i.e., formal and informal activities primarily directed to maintaining and enhancing faculty capabilities in public and professional service.

D. General Consideration Related to Documentation of Promotion Decisions

So that the decision process can be as objective as possible, each recommendation (forwarded from the academic department/unit to a higher administrative level in Tennessee Tech) should be accompanied by complete and careful documentation of the candidate's teaching performance, and/or research/scholarship/creative activity, and/or service/outreach contributions. Although the areas of teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity, and service/outreach are all considered important, certain exceptions may exist where evaluation may occur in one or the other area exclusively. In these cases, as well as in the general case, appropriate supervisory personnel shall clearly and adequately document the facts that justify the individual's promotion. The initiating academic department/unit may, if deemed desirable, include information relative to the candidate's research/scholarship/creative activity, publication record, exceptional administrative performance, or other types of contributions.

E. Board Approval of Promotion Recommendations

The President of Tennessee Tech should forward a list of promotion recommendations to the Board for approval.

F. Appeals of Promotion Decisions

Should a faculty member be dissatisfied with the decision respecting his/her promotion at any point in the promotion process, up to, but not including the recommendation of the President to the Board, he/she may appeal that decision through the Faculty Affairs Committee. The Faculty Affairs Committee shall issue a written recommendation to the President, who will make a decision about the matter. The President's decision will be final.

IX. Interpretation

The President or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

X. Citation of Authority for Policy

T.C.A. 49-8-203(a)(1)(E)

Approved by:

Academic Council: April 11, 2018

Administrative Council: April 4, 2018

University Assembly: April 18, 2018