

Faculty Policies (version dated 17 Feb 2006)

Policy on the General Faculty

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Introduction

The term general faculty has changed in meaning over the years. Although actually encompassing the entire faculty, it has evolved in general usage since the 1960s to mean those faculty who are normally not members of a specific academic department or school faculty. Such positions are tenure-ineligible and are for fixed terms.

The University has made significant use of general faculty positions covering a wide range of duties. A major purpose of this wide use has been to provide greater administrative and programmatic flexibility than allowed by the state classified system in employing professional staff who, by virtue of their level of responsibilities and qualifications, require a close peer relationship with the academic community. These positions may be grouped according to two major functional categories:

(1) academic: those positions that normally involve a range of responsibilities that does not encompass the full scope expected from traditional tenure track academic positions (e.g., an extraordinarily high obligation to research with minimal responsibility for classroom instruction or major responsibilities for teaching and clinical practice only).

(2) administrative: those positions that provide support services to faculty, students, and staff in order to maintain the institution's primary missions of instruction, research, and public service (e.g., libraries, continuing education, student personnel services, institutional research, legal services, public relations, development, and the offices of deans and vice presidents). As used in this section, these positions and the persons holding them will be referred to as "general faculty," and this section shall apply to such positions and persons, even if the individuals are members of a particular departmental or school faculty.

Qualifications

Academic general faculty positions normally require a terminal degree.

Administrative general faculty positions generally require a master's degree in an appropriate field and relevant experience (e.g., licensure or certification) and personal skills specified by the particular position description.

Rank and Title

Academic general faculty, depending upon their possessing the requisite degree requirements, years of experience, and level of responsibility in accordance with standards formulated by the cognizant vice president, may hold any of the academic or professorial ranks: lecturer, instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Various prefixes may be used in conjunction with these ranks, such as "visiting" and "research."

Administrative general faculty have the nominal academic rank of lecturer and a functional title fitting the position (e.g., Lecturer and Assistant Dean of Students; Lecturer and Associate Librarian; Lecturer and Assistant Registrar). On an exception basis, with evidence of recognized credentials and direct academic involvement, the president may recommend Board of Visitor election to professorial rank.

Election to academic rank by the Board of Visitors is dependent upon appointment to a position eligible for faculty status.

Administrative appointment by the president is coterminous with the term of faculty election with the exception of Reassignment and Removals (see below).

Initial Appointment

Academic general faculty are recommended to the provost or the vice president for health affairs by the deans of the schools. Initial appointments normally are for a minimum period of one calendar or academic year and a maximum term of three calendar or academic years.

Administrative general faculty are recommended to the provost or the vice president for health affairs by the vice presidents or the deans of the schools. Appointments normally are for a minimum period of one year and a maximum term of three years. The term of positions reporting to the president is normally five years.

Reappointments and Standards of Notice

Monitoring the progress of newly appointed general faculty members is the responsibility of the appropriate supervisor. An evaluation is made prior to the end of the first term of appointment to ascertain that the faculty member is performing in a highly satisfactory manner the assigned duties. If the evaluation is positive, the faculty member normally can expect to be reappointed for another one to three succeeding years. Notice of non-reappointment, or the intention not to recommend appointment should be given in writing in accordance with the following standards:

Standards of Notice

(1) Persons who have been employed in a general faculty position at the University for one year or less are entitled to three months of employment following notice that they will not be reappointed.

(2) Persons who have been employed in a general faculty position at the University for more than a year but up to two years are entitled to six months of employment following notice that they will not be reappointed.

(3) Persons who have been employed in a general faculty position at the University for more than two years are entitled to twelve months of employment following notice that they will not be reappointed.

For example, if a person's appointment expires on a specific date, this policy is satisfied if notice of non-reappointment is provided any time prior to or after that date so long as separation from University employment does not occur prior to the passage of the three-month, six-month, or twelve-month period of additional employment to which the employee is entitled after the notice has been given. It is, moreover, the person's period of actual employment at the time notice of non-renewal is given that determines the period of subsequent employment to which the employee is entitled and not the term of the person's appointment.

Academic general faculty in an entry-level position undergo no later than the end of the sixth year a critical evaluation to determine their professional progress. They may qualify for reappointment and promotion if they are judged to have met the criteria established by the relevant school and approved by the vice president and provost or the vice president for health affairs. Promotion and reappointment criteria may differ somewhat among the several schools, but all should require a high level of professional excellence.

Reappointments of administrative general faculty are to take place after a critical evaluation of professional progress. Reappointments may be with or without a promotion in functional title. Each vice president will establish suitable criteria for promotion in functional title, where this is appropriate.

Appointments to all general faculty positions are term appointments. No aspects of tenure are involved. Reappointments are not considered to be automatic. Performance of one's duties is the major factor in any reappointment decision.

However, beginning after July 1, 1989 with the first reappointment following the sixth year of service (as a general faculty member), members of the general faculty serve with the expectation of continued employment as long as (a) the services of the University continue to be of a type and scope requiring their level of professional skills, and (b) their job performance is judged to continue at a high level of productivity and effectiveness.

Reassignment and Removals

Members of the general faculty may be removed from their position by one of the following four procedures: reassignment, adequate notice of termination (Standards for Notice above), by action for just cause, or by abolition of positions or financial stringency.

a. Reassignment

Members holding a general faculty position may have their duties reassigned at any time. Reassignment is at the discretion of the unit manager and can involve removal from administrative title or supervisory responsibilities, or reassignment to another department. Neither notice (as defined above) nor action for just cause is required to effect a reassignment. The University's responsibility under reassignment shall be to make available a substitute position or duties reasonably commensurate with the person's education, experience, and performance. Administrative reassignment normally has no effect on academic rank or the current faculty term of election.

b. Standards for Notice (see above)

c. Removal by Action for Just Cause

Members of the general faculty may be removed for just cause. Stated causes for removal shall include, but not be limited to professional incompetence, unacceptable performance after due notice, unethical conduct, or misconduct that interferes with the capacity of the employee to perform effectively the requirements of his employment, falsification of credentials or experience.

Removal for cause is to be preceded by a predetermination hearing that is required before a decision can be made to terminate. In cases where there is some likelihood of threat to health or safety, the predetermination hearing can be waived.

Following a decision to discharge, written notice will be given to the individual and is subject to invocation by the affected employee of the due process and grievance procedures applicable to him. When a member of the general faculty has been notified of the intention to remove him for cause, the president or his designee may suspend his employment at any time

and continue the suspension until a final decision concerning removal has been reached by the appropriate procedures.

d. **Abolition of Position or Financial Stringency**

Members of the general faculty may be removed upon reduction or elimination of the specific services for which they were employed, or in the event of financial stringency when funds from which the salaries of such individuals are paid cease to be available to the University for such purposes.

Resignation

Members of the general faculty wishing to resign should give notice as far in advance as possible, taking into account the needs of the academic schedule. For administrative general faculty, ordinarily two months is the minimum acceptable notice.

Retirement

Normal retirement age for senior administrators (i.e., vice presidents, deans, directors, and department heads) from their administrative position is sixty-five.

Annual Evaluation and Salary Increase

Each year every general faculty member's professional performance is evaluated in a discussion with his/her supervisor and recorded in writing. Such evaluations are based upon standards of performance set by the supervisor with the participation of the faculty member and relate closely to the duties inherent in the functional title and job description of the position. Annual objectives and expectations are established during the evaluation which become criteria for judging professional performance in the subsequent year.

Integral to the evaluation is the completion of an annual report. All faculty members complete an annual report referencing their goals and objectives and citing their successes, shortfalls, and future direction. Additional items to be mentioned are service to the University, creative scholarship, and other professional activities and recognitions during the year. The annual report and evaluation become part of the basis for salary adjustments and other personnel matters.

Salary increases are based on merit; they are not automatic. Recommendations for salary adjustments originate with the department and are reviewed with the appropriate supervisor, vice president, and, where appropriate, the president.

Professional Advancement

The University of Virginia has a responsibility to improve continually its academic stature and assess the effectiveness of its general faculty members. These activities call for increasing rigor in the application of recognized criteria in the evaluation process for professional advancement. The University recognizes, however, that no faculty member can simultaneously engage in activities in all of the areas listed below. Therefore, a member of the general faculty seeking advancement, in accordance with standards formulated by the cognizant vice president, should make long-range plans to address these criteria in planning his/her professional goals since senior administrators, in evaluating a colleague, will assess his/her performance in these areas over time.

Performance: General faculty members have an obligation to maintain a high level of performance in carrying out their job-related duties and responsibilities. A high level of competence in the performance of one's duties will be the major factor in any evaluation or advancement decision.

These decisions are based upon standards of performance set by the supervisor with the participation of the faculty member and relate closely to the duties inherent in the functional title and job description of the position. Annually set objectives and expectations become one of the important criteria for judging professional job performance in the subsequent year.

Service to the University: The University has historically depended upon the general faculty for quality services rendered outside the classroom. Therefore these professional staff may reasonably be expected to demonstrate participation in the operational concerns of the institution. Such participation may include service on department, division, or presidential committees, service as chair of these committees, special assignments of a University-wide nature, etc.

Professional and Scholarly Activities: General faculty members have an obligation to maintain a high level of professional competence and to keep abreast of developments in their field. Effective administrators also benefit from active involvement in the intellectual and scholarly developments of one's field which often lead to contributions to the profession.

Leaves With Pay

See the [Leaves of Absence Policy](#) for a complete overview of the University's leave guidelines.

Leaves Without Pay

For employees who must be absent for educational or personal reasons during extended periods, leaves of absence without pay not to exceed two consecutive years may be requested by salaried members of the general faculty subsequent to the following conditions:

- (1) the reason for the leave of absence is approved by the appropriate supervisory official,
- (2) the cognizant vice president makes final approval on the leave request, and
- (3) the duties and responsibilities of the candidate for a leave of absence can be reassigned to other employees or performed adequately by interim employees. Finally, disability leave without pay but with continuation of fringe benefits permissible under State and University regulations may be granted to a member of the general faculty who requests it of the supervisor, chair, or dean if a temporary disability in the faculty member's family will make it difficult for that faculty member to fulfill his or her assigned responsibilities. Family disability leave cannot exceed one year.

A leave of absence without pay is an agreement by the University to return the faculty member to his/her position or a comparable one upon completion of leave. Annual leave is reduced pro rata while on leave of absence without pay. See the [Leaves of Absence Policy](#) for a complete overview of the University's leave guidelines.

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