Faculty Policies

The Faculty

- The Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty
- The Non-Tenure-Track Faculty
- Appointment Types and Titles
- Appointment of Academic Administrative Officers

The Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty
The Board of Visitors has exclusive authority to confer faculty status. It does so by "electing" an individual to the faculty in a formal resolution. The term "election" therefore has a special meaning and is used only when action by the Board of Visitors is required. By comparison, the president makes administrative appointments to assist that office and other administrative officers in conducting the business of the University. (The Board of Visitors approves only the appointment of the president, the vice presidents, and the chancellor of the University of Virginia's College at Wise. Other appointments are merely reported by the president.) "Appointment," therefore, is an action taken by or for the president and reported to the Board of Visitors. Thus, a clear distinction is maintained between faculty status and administrative assignments.

The University has no single, formal, written contract with a faculty member. Currently, when a person is invited to join the faculty, the relevant dean writes a letter specifying the proposed conditions of employment. If accepted by the candidate and if approved by the Board of Visitors, these conditions are the basis of formal action by the Board of Visitors which passes a resolution stating the title, salary, and term of the election. If the election is for a defined period of time, it is an election with term. If no time limit is specified, the election is without term, the equivalent of tenure. Usually, when an administrative appointment is involved, the Board of Visitors elects the faculty member to a term that is the same as the period of administrative appointment.

The statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia do not provide specifically for tenure, but when the Board of Visitors elects an individual to the faculty of the University of Virginia without term it, in effect, grants tenure. This action and its effect have been recognized by the Commonwealth (Faculty Tenure and Activity, Senate Document No. 7, Commonwealth of Virginia, 1977).

By long tradition, the University of Virginia recognizes the importance of academic freedom for faculty and students as an essential ingredient of academic excellence. An election without term is a fundamental means of achieving academic freedom in the University community. Faculty members may be elected without term after a probationary period as assistant professor and promotion to a higher rank, as associate professor (with or without a probationary period), and as professor. Only full-time teaching faculty may be elected without term. All part-time elections and all administrative appointments are made for limited periods.

The teaching and research functions of the University are performed by a variety of individuals with various titles, some of which may lead to tenure, others of which remain of fixed (or limited) term.

The Non-Tenure-Track Faculty
Non-tenure-track faculty may perform an array of functions including teaching, research, or public service, as well as providing academic support in areas such as student services and the libraries, and performing administrative duties that relate directly to management policies and procedures or the general business and administrative operations of the institution.

The primary policy regarding the employment of non-tenure-track faculty is maintained by the Office of the Vice President and Provost and is available through that office's web site. This policy recognizes two categories of non-tenure-track faculty: academic and administrative or professional. In the event of a grievance, academic non-tenure-track faculty use the procedures administered by the Faculty Senate. Administrative and professional non-tenure-track faculty use a separate procedure, the Grievance Procedure for Administrative Faculty. In the event of staffing reductions, the Guidelines for General Faculty Staffing Due to Financial Stringency come into effect.

Appointment Types and Titles

- Tenure-Accruing Titles
Faculty Titles

Tenure-Accruing Titles
The normal sequence leading to an election without term is assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. These are referred to as the "professorial ranks." If elected to one of these ranks with a term of two years or more, the position is on the tenure track, and full-time service at the University of Virginia counts within the probationary period. Instructors and some assistant professors, if elected for nonrenewable terms, are not tenure-track positions. In several respects, procedures and timetables may vary for faculty in particular schools.

Instructor
An instructor is a junior faculty member who generally holds at least a master's degree. A large number of instructors are part-time. Instructors are elected to terms of one year or less and may be re-elected.

Acting Assistant Professor
Acting assistant professors are full-time faculty members who have completed all requirements for the doctoral degree except the dissertation. Acting assistant professors are elected for one-year terms. They are expected to receive the doctoral degree (or other terminal degree in the professional schools) by the end of the initial term of election, despite full-time teaching commitments. When the degree is awarded, "acting" is removed from the title. The time spent as an acting assistant professor is included in the probationary period leading to an election without term.

Assistant Professor
The first professorial rank for teaching faculty who hold the terminally qualifying degree is assistant professor. (In some professional schools, e.g., architecture, a professional degree is qualification for election to assistant professor. In other schools a doctorate is the customary qualifying degree.) The basic qualification for this rank is evidence of potential as an independent scholar and teacher as judged by the school or department in which the position exists. Tenure-track assistant professors are elected initially for fixed terms and may be reelected by the Board of Visitors up to a limit of seven years aggregate full-time service. During the sixth year of this probationary period, if not before, an assistant professor is considered for promotion and election without term.

Associate Professor
Associate professors are elected to this rank after a period in which they have demonstrated scholarly work and effective teaching that have earned them an acceptable level of national standing in their disciplines or professions. An individual who meets this standard may be elected initially as an associate professor. Promotion to this rank from assistant professor ordinarily is accompanied by an election without term. However, associate professors may be elected with a specified term and serve a probationary period not to exceed the seven-year period.

Professor
The title professor is reserved for individuals who have achieved advanced standing among scholars in their fields throughout the academic world. Whether by internal promotion or initial election, professors ordinarily are elected without term.

Chair Holders
Chair holders are particularly distinguished professors who are elected to named chairs. Chairs have been established by private donors, by the Alumni Association, and by the Commonwealth of Virginia under the Eminent Scholars Program. Over 350 chairs are listed in the current Data Digest. Refer to the Policy on the Appointment of Endowed and Eminent Scholars Chairs for additional information.

University Professor
Upon nomination by the vice president and provost, the president may designate a limited number of faculty who teach or conduct research that crosses school boundaries as University professors. They report directly to the president. With approval of the president, a University professor may teach or supervise research in one or more of the schools or departments. In that case, a University professor is responsible academically to the relevant dean or deans, but continues to make an annual report to the president.

Emeritus Rank
The honorary rank of professor emeritus or associate professor emeritus is conferred upon retiring faculty following nominations made to the Board of Visitors by the president for the following categories of employees: full or associate professors retiring after age forty-five after at least ten years of service; chair holders retiring after age forty-five with five years continuous service; former full or associate professors who have previously retired after age forty-five after ten years service. The rank attained prior to retirement usually governs the emeritus rank.

Titles with Limited Term
The following titles are either part-time or limited in term. Falling outside the sequence of professorial ranks, they do not carry elections without term, even though they are associated closely with teaching and research activities.


**Lecturer**

Lecturers are faculty with special experience or professional qualifications. Many offer part-time instruction. The title may be used to recognize a faculty member who contributes to or affiliates with a school or department outside of the primary affiliation. Administrative and professional faculty normally hold the academic rank of lecturer and a functional title.

**Research Professor**

Faculty members whose principal assignment is to conduct research on sponsored programs may be given the titles research instructor, research assistant professor, research associate professor, or research professor. Any teaching or guidance of graduate students is generally directly related to the professor's research program. Renewal of these term elections is subject to availability of research funds.

**Visiting Professor**

The title "visiting" is limited to persons who hold professorial rank, usually who are on leave from another institution or professorial affiliation.

**Visiting Scholar**

Visiting scholars are elected, often for short terms, so that they may participate in scholarly or research activities in a sponsoring department or school. They serve without pay and usually do not participate formally in instruction.

**Diplomat-in-Residence**

This title is reserved for specially qualified individuals who participate in instruction and research in the Department of Government and Foreign Affairs.

**Appointment of Academic Administrative Officers**

In accord with Jefferson's original conception that teaching faculty should be responsible for operating the University, academic administrative officers are chosen from faculty whose primary interest is teaching and scholarship. Often eminent scholars, they assume the tasks of institutional leadership temporarily and when their administrative terms are completed, they resume their teaching and research. The manner in which academic administrators are selected is exemplified by the provost's policy on selection of academic deans. This policy and procedure should be followed in the selection of department chairs and, usually, other line officers of academic administration.

**Selection of Academic Deans**

The president of the University is responsible for appointing academic deans, with the advice and consultation of the appropriate faculty. The vice president and provost has certain responsibilities in implementing this policy, namely the selection of search committees and the reporting of their progress and conclusions to the president. Search committees consist primarily of faculty members, normally faculty members of the school involved, and may also include students and alumni. Search committees solicit faculty views, including those of department chairs, weigh these views, and make their recommendations to the vice president and provost and the president. Deans of school faculties are expected to exhibit leadership qualities based on high standards of academic achievement, experience, and ability to work with people. Deans serve for a stated term (usually five years) and may be reappointed. The procedure for reappointment of a dean involves a similar process of faculty advice and consultation.

Reappointment of senior administrators is contingent on the recommendation of an advisory committee reporting to the appropriate vice president or immediate supervisor.