12.01.99.C0.01 Academic Rank Descriptors for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

Revised: May 4, 2026
Next Scheduled Review: May 4, 2031
Revision History

Procedure Summary

Tenured and tenure-track faculty at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) have three (3) rank levels: assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. In order to earn each respective rank, faculty members must meet certain requirements and benchmarks. The academic preparation, experience, teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity (RSCA), and service expectations are explained for each rank. This procedure should be read in conjunction with university procedure *12.01.99.C0.03, Responsibilities of Faculty Members*.

Procedure

1. ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

This rank is the entry level for a tenure-track position. In addition to fulfilling faculty responsibilities, faculty holding this rank must meet the following qualifications.

1.1. Academic Preparation. An assistant professor must hold an earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree.

1.2. Experience. Some university/academic unit (e.g., college, school) teaching experience or related professional/work experience is preferred.

1.3. Teaching. An assistant professor shows continuing progress in teaching proficiency by deepening knowledge in their teaching specialty and developing effective instructional strategies and techniques. They are developing the expertise needed to teach their assigned courses by participating in professional development activities. They understand university and academic unit degree requirements and other matters related to academic advisement as well as requirements for graduate study and professional entry into the field.

1.4. RSCA. An assistant professor establishes an agenda in RSCA beyond instructional assignments. The agenda of inquiry results in published scholarly works or peer-reviewed products/creative activity at the regional or national level. Areas of accomplishment are appropriate to the academic discipline as stated in department guidelines and the academic unit handbook.

1.5. Service. An assistant professor participates in service to the academic unit and university through committees and special projects. They may also participate in and lead professional and community service insofar as the activities relate to their discipline or serve the university's mission.

2. ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

2.1. This rank represents growth, experience, and leadership in the academic profession. In addition to fulfilling faculty responsibilities, faculty holding this rank must meet the following qualifications.

2.1.1. Academic Preparation. An associate professor must hold an earned doctorate or the equivalent terminal degree.

2.1.2. Experience. An associate professor usually has at least five (5) years of full-time university faculty experience at the rank of assistant professor. Related professional experience may substitute in rare cases.

2.1.3. Teaching. An associate professor has a broad knowledge of their discipline and an in-depth knowledge in one or more parts of the field. The associate professor is a teacher of proven quality. They may be involved in experimental, innovative teaching. They know degree requirements for academic advisement and career counseling and serve as a mentor.

2.1.4. RSCA. An associate professor continues an agenda of inquiry that has resulted in published scholarly works or peer-reviewed products/creative activity at the regional and national level related to their discipline. Areas of accomplishment are appropriate to the academic discipline as stated in department guidelines and the academic unit handbook.

2.1.5. Service. An associate professor has begun to assume a position of leadership in the academic unit and university by serving on committees or special projects. They may also participate in and lead professional and community service insofar as the activities relate to their discipline or serve the university's mission.

2.2. The general expectations for promotion of tenure-track faculty members to associate professor are as follows.

2.2.1. Associate professors should have begun to assume a position of leadership in their department, academic unit, and the university.

2.2.2. Unless early promotion is granted, at least five (5) years of full-time tenure-track experience at the rank of assistant professor at TAMU-CC is required before a faculty member can apply for promotion to the rank of associate professor. Years of credit at another institution that are stated in writing at the time of the initial faculty appointment may count towards this five-year timeframe at the discretion of the faculty member.

3. PROFESSOR

3.1. This is the summit of academic rank, representing a position of leadership in the university. In addition to fulfilling faculty responsibilities, faculty holding this rank must meet the following qualifications.

3.1.1. Academic Preparation. A professor must hold an earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree.

3.1.2. Experience. A professor usually has at least ten (10) years of full-time university faculty experience including at least four (4) years in the rank of associate professor. Related professional experience may substitute in rare cases.

3.1.3. Teaching. A professor has demonstrated growth and skill in teaching, a proven record of teaching excellence, and a continued demonstration of interest in improving pedagogical skills. They have assumed leadership in curricular development and issues related to teaching improvement in the discipline. They are thoroughly familiar with university and academic unit degree requirements and other matters related to academic advisement, career development and opportunities, and placement. They are a teacher and advisor to colleagues in this area.

3.1.4. RSCA. A professor has an agenda of inquiry that has resulted in published scholarly works or peer-reviewed products/creative activity at the national or international level and has a demonstrated record mentoring colleagues in such activities. Areas of accomplishment are appropriate to the academic discipline as stated in department guidelines and the academic unit handbook.

3.1.5. Service. A professor has assumed a position of leadership and service to the university on committees and special projects. They may also participate in and lead professional and community service insofar as the activities relate to their discipline or serve the university's mission.

3.2. The general expectations for promotion of tenured or tenure-track faculty members to professor are as follows.

3.2.1. Professors must have demonstrated leadership and service to their department, academic unit, and the university.

3.2.2. A faculty member must possess at least four (4) years of full-time faculty experience at the rank of associate professor prior to applying for promotion to the rank of professor. Generally, ten (10) years of full-time tenure-track faculty experience is required before a faculty member can apply for promotion to the rank of professor. Years of credit at another institution that are stated in writing at the time of the initial faculty appointment may count towards this ten-year timeframe at the discretion of the faculty member.

4. PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS EQUIVALENT TO A TERMINAL DEGREE

The tenured faculty of a particular program and the dean/director of an academic unit may determine that it is in the university's best interest to appoint and/or promote an individual who has recognized professional achievements and/or experience equivalent to a terminal degree. These professional achievements would be activities that have occurred outside of TAMU-CC. Under such a circumstance, the faculty application for promotion must be accompanied by a written recommendation to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost) from the academic unit dean/director in consultation with the appropriate faculty. The Provost and the President will consider the recommendation before granting the exception to the academic preparation criteria. Such exceptions should be rare.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Policy *12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure*
University Procedure *12.01.99.C0.03, Responsibilities of Faculty Members*
University Procedure *12.01.99.C0.04, Descriptions of Teaching, Librarianship, Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, and Service*
University Procedure *33.99.04.C0.02, Promotion of Full-Time Faculty Members*

This procedure supersedes:

- *12.01.99.C1.01, Academic Rank Descriptors for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty*

Contact Office

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