

Guidelines for the Promotion of Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Service Faculty and Joint Appointments

General Processes

This document outlines processes for faculty promotion within Texas A&M AgriLife Research (Research), Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (Extension), also referred to as Agency or Agencies (as appropriate), and AgriLife faculty with joint Research/Extension appointments. Specified in this document are processes for evaluation for the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, administratively located (ad loc.) to Research or Extension. The term 'supervisor' used in this document refers to the persons overseeing the faculty member, be it the department head, the center director, the unit leader, associate department head or the appropriate combination.

If a candidate has a teaching responsibility (by appointment or on an overload basis), the Department Head will evaluate teaching performance as per their departmental guidelines and convey their assessment in the Department Head letter that is submitted to the Agency Associate Director(s).

Timelines

Evaluation of Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Service faculty members follows similar promotion timelines as College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS) faculty.

Position Description

The candidate's position description serves as the document of record (baseline) used by committee members, external reviewers, and supervisors to evaluate the accomplishments and impacts of the candidate. Therefore, it is imperative that the faculty member's position description is current and accurately reflects the candidate's responsibilities and duties. This will allow a fair and equitable evaluation of the candidate's performance. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their position description in Workday is up to date and matches the position description in their dossier.

Mentoring Committee

The mentoring committee is a critical entity that contributes to the success of new faculty members. The supervisor(s) should provide guidance on suitable faculty mentors.

Responsibilities of the mentoring committee include:

- Assisting the candidate in developing their dossier for their Mid-Term Review (described below) and for promotion.
- The mentoring committee assists the candidate in developing a list of potential external reviewers (for promotion only) that may evaluate the faculty member during candidacy for promotion.
- The chair of the mentoring committee should be an Extension faculty member

for Extension ad loc. faculty and be a Research faculty member for Research ad loc. faculty with a rank higher than the mentee. Committee members can consist of faculty members from other Departments/Centers/Units as deemed appropriate, including tenured or tenure-track faculty.

- Documentation of the status of the faculty member's performance recommendations are presented to the supervisor(s) annually, until the faculty member successfully moves to the rank of associate professor.

Developing the Dossier and Supporting Materials for Promotion

Potential candidates should refer to their Agency's career ladder documents regarding timelines for their Midterm Review and promotion considerations, dates when relevant materials are due, metrics to consider when assessing readiness to seek promotion, and items to include when developing their dossier.

Candidate's Dossier (see Appendix VI Candidate Checklist)

The candidate will provide the following to their supervisor(s):

- Candidate 3-page Summary Statement
 - Overview: The summary should reflect the philosophy of the candidate and describe how the candidate has translated this into impacts in their field of discipline and to local, state, national, and international stakeholders. It should show disciplinary leadership at the career stage of the candidate (see Appendix II for more details).
 - 100% Research ad loc. Candidate Statement - A statement on research and scholarly contributions, academic teaching, and student mentoring (if applicable), and service/outreach activities as defined in their position description will be provided by the candidate. This will be the first document in the dossier. The document may be up to 3 single-sided pages in length, 11 pt. (allowed minimum), Arial or Times New Roman fonts, single spaced, with one-inch margins.
 - 100% Extension ad loc. Candidate Statement - A statement on Extension, scholarly contributions and research, academic teaching, and student mentoring (if applicable), and service, as defined in their position description will be provided by the candidate. This will be the first document in the dossier. The document may be up to 3 single-sided pages in length, 11 pt. (allowed minimum), Arial or Times New Roman fonts, single spaced, with one-inch margins.
 - Joint Research/Extension Appointment Candidate Statement – A statement should follow the format of the majority ad loc. appointment (Research or Extension) with the addition of a separate section (within the 3-pages) added to the summary of a faculty member from the minority ad loc. (Research or Extension) appointment.
- Candidates' CV should include (see Appendix II for more details):
 - Identifiers to include education background, years of service, years of service in

- current rank, department, unit, center, and appointment specifics.
- The candidate's Extension accomplishments section for Extension ad loc. faculty and Research accomplishments section for Research ad loc. faculty.
- Additional categories in which the candidate has demonstrated contributions that align with their position description.
- Activities within each category are to be listed from most recent to older.
- When serving as a co-PI on a grant, the candidate is encouraged to provide 1-2 sentences under the grant information describing the unique role of the candidate to the project.
- The total value of the support received, and the dollars directed by the candidate are to be included in the AgriLife Research and Extension Summary Chart for Grants and Other Funding (Appendix III) which:
 - Should outline the candidate's activities in obtaining support for programming.
 - Should include internal and external grants, contracts, commodity support, gifts and user fees from programming efforts and services offered.
 - May include in-kind contributions.

External Review Letters (applies to promotion only)

- At least four (no more than seven) external reviewers will be asked to evaluate the candidate's productivity as provided in the dossier and assess their quality of work and contribution/impact to their field. The candidate should have a potential list of "arms-length" external reviewers from their mentoring committee discussions. In addition, the candidate may provide input regarding the selection of external reviewers by submitting an AgriLife Research-Extension Candidate Suggested Reviewer Checklist form to their supervisor(s) (Department Head/Center Director/Unit Leader)(Appendix IV). Half of the external reviewer letters are selected from the candidate's list and half are selected from the supervisor's list (Appendix V).
 - External Letters
 - "Arm's Length" external letters refer to letters from peers with minimal direct interaction with the candidate, including those who are not: co-author or co-PI on a publication or grant (last 5 years); not a previous advisor, mentor, committee member or mentee.
 - Source of Letters – Letters may be from the following sources:
 - Leading Land Grant institutions, and/or other institutions with outstanding leaders in the candidate's field of expertise.
 - Government scientists and specialists.
 - University letters should be from Professors; Associate Professors may serve as reviewers for candidates seeking promotion from the rank of Assistant Professor to Associate Professor.
 - For candidates with joint appointments, letters should be from

Research faculty and Extension faculty and/or faculty that appreciate the contributions of research and Extension to overall success.

- Letters cannot be from the candidate's "do not contact" list.
- Include in the promotion packet a list of all external reviewers contacted regardless of whether they responded with a letter. For external letters, a reviewer biography that includes justification for their appropriateness (recognized expert, etc.) is included in the packet.
- In some fields, it may be difficult to find reviewers who have not collaborated with the candidate (e.g., being part of a large research consortium or a very narrowly focused area). In such a case, the supervisor(s) must obtain approval from the appropriate Associate Director to include letters from these reviewers. These letters are to be submitted to the AgriLife Research Peer Review Committee and/or AgriLife Extension Peer Review Committee as appropriate for review.
- All External Review Letters requested and received must be submitted in the candidate's packet.

Other Letters

- Unsolicited letters from students and stakeholders may be included at the end of the promotion packet as appendices, separate from the External Reviewer letters, when forwarding to the AgriLife Peer Review Committees.
- These testimonials are not considered peer External Review letters and may not be read by the Peer Review Committee.

Position Description

The department will upload the current position description of the candidate into Interfolio.

Evaluation Process

AgriLife Peer Review Committees

- **AgriLife Research Peer Review Committee**
 - An AgriLife-wide Research committee is comprised of 10 members plus a non-voting Chair, all of whom are majority ad-locked to AgriLife Research, will evaluate candidates with a research appointment. Members must be at the rank of Professor. Each serves a two-year commitment.
 - The committee will consist of faculty with diverse research backgrounds, and there will be no more than two people from a specific department or unit on the committee at a time. Faculty with majority AgriLife Research joint appointments will be represented on the committee, as possible.
 - Each appointed committee member will serve on the committee for two years.

If there is a vacancy, then the Research Associate Director/Chief Scientific Officer will replace that committee member with a qualified faculty member for the remainder of that person's term. That provides continuity to the committee evaluation process. The Chair will confer with the Research Associate Director/Chief Scientific Officer to select a Co-chair to assist the Chair and to serve as Chair in the subsequent year.

- The AgriLife Research Peer Review Committee will be responsible for reviewing the full packet of each candidate and providing recommendations to the supervisor(s) whether the candidate should be promoted to the next higher rank.
 - The committee will work together to evaluate the candidate in Scholarly Contribution/Research, Academic Teaching/Student Mentoring (as applicable), Extension (as applicable) and Service/Outreach. The committee will prepare a report outlining their overall summary of the candidate's performance and provide a specific evaluation for each of their responsibilities as defined by their position description.
 - Each committee member will provide the Chair with their recommendation (yes, no, recused, or abstain). All members will vote despite department/unit affiliation.
 - The committee chair will provide the committee's vote and a written report to the supervisor(s). The committee's vote and written report will remain with the candidate's packet and evaluation material throughout the process.
- **AgriLife Extension Peer Review Committee**
 - An AgriLife Extension committee is comprised of 10 members plus a non-voting Chair, all of whom are majority ad locked to AgriLife Extension, will evaluate candidates with an Extension appointment. Members must be at the rank of Professor. Each serves a two-year commitment.
 - The committee will consist of a mix of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Community Health, and Youth Programming related faculty (as faculty of the Professor rank within these groups are available to serve), and there will be no more than two people from a specific department or unit on the committee at a time. Faculty with majority AgriLife Extension joint appointments will be represented on the committee.
 - Each appointed committee member will serve on the committee for two years. If there is a vacancy, then the Extension Associate Directors will replace that committee member with a qualified faculty member for the remainder of that person's term. That provides continuity to the committee evaluation process. The Chair will confer with the Associate Directors to select a Co-chair to assist the Chair and to serve as Chair in the subsequent year.
 - The Peer Review Committee will be responsible for reviewing the full packet of each candidate and providing recommendations to the supervisor(s) whether the candidate should be promoted to the next higher rank.
 - The committee will work together to evaluate the candidate in Extension,

Scholarly Contribution/Research, Academic Teaching/Student Mentoring (as applicable) and Service.

- Each committee member will provide the Chair with their recommendation (yes, no, recused, or abstain). All members will vote despite department/unit affiliation.
 - The committee Chair will provide the committee's vote and written reports to the Department Head/Unit Leader. The committee's vote and written report will remain with the candidate's packet and evaluation material throughout the process.
- **Joint Appointments**
 - Both the AgriLife Research Peer Review Committee and the AgriLife Extension Peer Review Committee will evaluate candidates with joint appointments independently. The committee representing the majority ad loc. appointment is responsible for writing the majority report. The committee representing the minority appointment will prepare a minority report to be included in the final Peer Review Committee report presented by the majority Chair. This report is submitted to the appropriate supervisors.

Letters from other Supervisors

- If the Research faculty member has a 100% or partial Research appointment at a Center, then the Center Director will provide a separate letter of evaluation.
- For faculty with a partial or 100% Extension appointment, the Associate Department Head/Program Leader for Extension will provide a separate letter of evaluation to the Department Head.

Department Head/Unit Leader Review and Evaluation Letter

- The Department Head or Unit Leader (as appropriate) will review the candidate's dossier materials, the Peer Review Committee Report, and the external review letters.
 - Additionally, they will consider past faculty performance review documents.
 - If the candidate has a Joint Appointment, the Department Head will evaluate the candidate in all areas of their joint appointment (Research, Extension, and/or Teaching).
 - The Department Head's letter of evaluation plus all materials assembled during the promotion evaluation process will be submitted to the appropriate AgriLife Associate Director(s).
- **Department Head and Center Director for Center-based faculty with Research appointments.**
 - The Department Head and Center Director will both review all materials for these candidates and prepare their own independent evaluation letters. These letters are

submitted to the appropriate Associate Director(s).

Associate Director(s) Reviews

- The appropriate Associate Director(s) will evaluate packets that fall within their supervisory area and make a recommendation to the Agency Director(s).
- For joint appointments, the Associate Directors from both Agencies will discuss the candidate and submit a recommendation to the majority and minority appointment Directors, as appropriate.

Agency Director

- For 100% appointments, the Agency Director determines the final decision about whether the candidate's request for promotion will be approved or denied.
- For candidates with joint appointments, the majority appointment Agency Director will confer with the minority appointment Agency Director and determine the appropriate path forward regarding promotion.

Appeal Process

In the event of a negative promotion decision, the faculty member is entitled to a written statement of reasons that contributed to that decision. If requested by the candidate, the supervisor(s) will provide a statement of rationale.

If the Director recommends against promotion and that recommendation is contrary to the recommendation of the supervisor(s), then the Director shall inform the supervisor(s) and the candidate of the reasons for the decision.

Appeals Procedure for Professorial Progression

The candidate has the right to present grievances concerning only the promotion process. Basis for an appeal regarding progression in rank exists when, in the opinion of the faculty member, one or more of the following has occurred:

- There was a failure to follow the prescribed procedures.
- There was a failure to adhere to the established criteria for determining progression in rank.
- Faculty with concerns or grievances regarding other aspects of the process are encouraged to seek resolution through established supervisory channels before filing a written appeal. If the matter cannot be resolved, the faculty member may seek a hearing by an appeals committee.
- The written appeal shall include the basis for the appeal and must contain any supporting evidence and/or documentation. Written appeals concerning denial of progression in rank must be filed within 20 business days of notification of denial.

- If an appeal is requested, a seven-member Appeals Committee shall be appointed by the Agency Director(s) to review and/or hear individual appeals regarding progression in rank.
- The appellant may request to meet with the Appeals Committee to present his/her case. Such a request shall be included in the written appeal. If the appellant elect's representation by an attorney, the appellant will notify the Director(s) Office at least five working days before the date the appeal is to be heard. The appellant will be solely responsible for any legal expenses incurred in such representation.
- The Appeals Committee shall consider the merits of the case and forward its written recommendation with supporting documentation to the Director(s) for final action within 20 business days from the end of the appeal hearing.
- The Director(s) shall notify the appellant in writing of acceptance or rejection of the Appeals Committee recommendation. Such notification shall be made within 60 business days of receipt of the written appeal.

Mid-Term Review

Mid-term reviews are a valuable resource for Assistant Professors seeking future promotion to Associate Professor. The mid-term review should be scheduled as close to the third year from the date of hire as reasonable (during the end of the second year for review in the third year).

- A mid-term review is intended to provide a formative review of the faculty member near the mid-point between the faculty member's date of hire and their request to be considered for promotion to associate professor.
- This review will familiarize the faculty member with the promotion process and ensure that the faculty member understands the expectations of those entities that will be responsible for the promotion decision.
- This review will ensure the faculty member has a clear understanding of the promotion process, their dossier, and their status and progress.
- This review should mimic the promotion review process as closely as possible, as described above, except External Review letters are not sought nor included.

Modification of Process Guidelines

These guidelines will be reviewed, and, if necessary, changes will be made after the first year of implementation; thereafter, the guidelines will be reviewed every three years (a) to identify unintended consequences and effects of these guidelines on faculty and Unit morale, retention, and recruitment, and (b) to propose any needed revisions.