

FACULTY PROMOTION AND TENURE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**Revision approved by majority vote of faculty from the VCU School of Public Health on
August 21, 2026**

1.0 Introduction

The objective of this document is to further clarify the policies and procedures of the faculty promotion and tenure process for the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Public Health (SOPH), hereafter referred to as the School guidelines. These School guidelines are meant to supplement and expand upon the Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policies and Procedures of VCU for both [tenure-eligible](#) and [term faculty](#), as well as the [transitional](#) guidelines, hereafter referred to as the University guidelines. **Each Department in the School of Public Health is responsible for establishing explicit guidelines** for the process of conducting faculty review for promotion and tenure, hereafter referred to as the Department guidelines, which should include specific criteria by which the faculty assessments will be made. These departmental guidelines may amplify and clarify but not contradict either of the School or University guidelines. In situations where the Department guidelines may be in conflict with the School guidelines, then the School guidelines will prevail. In situations where the Department guidelines may be in conflict with the University guidelines, then the University guidelines will prevail. In situations where the School guidelines may be in conflict with the University guidelines, then the University guidelines will prevail. It is the responsibilities of the Dean, the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, and the appropriate Department Chair (i) to ensure that University, School and Department guidelines are provided to all faculty members, and (ii) that reviews are conducted according to University, School and Department guidelines.

2.0 SOPH-Specific Additions to University Guidelines

The following language is supplemental and in addition to the corresponding sections of the University guidelines. Unless otherwise specified, the additional language provided here applies to both term and tenure-eligible faculty.

2.1 Tenured Appointments (from the University Guidelines for Tenure-Eligible Faculty)

Tenured/tenure-eligible faculty hold appointments in the School of Public Health with responsibilities that include (i) teaching, mentoring, and training future investigators, (ii) the pursuit of meritorious independent scholarship, securing external funding to support the research effort, and (iii) providing service to the Department, School, University, community and profession. The awarding of tenure reflects a deepened commitment between the faculty member and their Department and School. By awarding tenure, the Department and School acknowledge the high quality of faculty member's scholarship, teaching and service, and commit to helping the tenured faculty member sustain and improve upon that work over time. By receiving tenure, the faculty member acknowledges their role as a leader in the research, teaching and service missions of their Department and School, and pledges to serve in such leadership capacities as appropriate to their position. The effort distribution for tenure-eligible and tenure-track faculty are to be determined by the faculty and their Department Chair according to the School of Public Health Effort Distribution Policy.

2.1 Term Appointments (From the University Guidelines for Term Faculty)

A recommendation to appoint a term (non-tenure) faculty member should include the rank and the proposed appointment period. The letter of appointment must stipulate that this is a non-tenure eligible position and the appointment period. Term (non-tenure) faculty supported by restricted funds may be subject to different terms of notification of non-renewal than are specified below. Conditions and notifications for non-renewal are to be specified in the contract letter for term (non-tenure) appointments. Term faculty may be assigned to one of several tracks depending upon their major responsibilities (Teaching, Research, Service or Administrative, which are used as modifiers). In everyday usage, the parenthetical designations of “Term” and “Teaching, Research, Service or Administrative” may be removed from the titles of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor holding Non-Tenure appointments, but it must remain in the titles in personnel files, administrative records and other similar documents. The effort distribution for term faculty, as well as the application of Teaching, Research, Service or Administrative designations, are to be determined by faculty and their Department Chair according to the School of Public Health Effort Distribution Policy.

The **Adjunct** titles (Adjunct Professor, Adjunct Associate Professor, Adjunct Assistant Professor, or Adjunct Instructor) apply to individuals with a part-time commitment to the appointing department and with no full-time appointment in the University. For individuals who have a primary appointment in a University unit different from that making the adjunct appointment, the appropriate title is **Affiliate Faculty** ([Affiliate Faculty Appointments Policy and Procedures](#)).

2.2.1 Alteration of the Probationary Period (From the University Guidelines for Tenure-Eligible Faculty)

Expedited review may occur outside the regular promotion and tenure cycle in the case of newly hired faculty and – in exceptional cases – for existing faculty. Expedited review of new and existing faculty requires a departmental review committee appointed by the Department Chair, with the same composition and peer review requirements as that for candidates under consideration in the regular promotion and tenure cycle. The recommendation for promotion and tenure by the departmental review committee shall be submitted to the school committee, Dean, Provost, president and Board of Visitors for approval.

2.7 Notice of Appointment (From the University Guidelines for Tenure-Eligible Faculty)

2.5 Notice of Appointment (From the University Guidelines for Term Faculty)

Unless otherwise specified in the contract letter, when the appointment of a full-time tenure-eligible or term (non-tenure) faculty member is not to be renewed, the faculty member shall be notified according to the timeline specified in the [Terms of Conditions of Employment for University and Academic Professionals](#).

3.1.1 Process Timeline

The timetable for Promotion and Tenure Decision Activities is found in Appendix I.

3.1.4 Scholarship

Scholarship includes peer-reviewed contributions in various Public and Health Sciences fields, creation and dissemination of non-peer-reviewed material for the public benefit (examples include but are not limited to policy briefs, “white paper” reports, books and monographs, newspaper or magazine articles, interviews or podcasts), and community-engaged research. The SOPH values high-quality scholarship led by our faculty, as well as that achieved through the collaborative efforts of our faculty. The SOPH recognizes the expanded definition of scholarship proposed by Boyer and colleagues that includes:

- The scholarship of **discovery** that advances new knowledge in a discipline.
- The scholarship of **integration** that makes connections between new knowledge across disciplines such as translational and interdisciplinary research.
- The scholarship of **application** which takes the outcome of new knowledge to socially consequential problems such as outcomes research, public health and clinical guidelines, diagnostic or treatment response criteria, and the creation of new or innovative quality improvement programs or methods based on the outcomes of empirical research.
- The scholarship of **teaching and learning** which explores ways to help learners acquire new knowledge and develop specific skills and attitudes, such as the creation or evaluation of new teaching methods or curricula, as well as the use of new technologies to improve learning or the dissemination of learning

Both the quantity and quality of scholarly activities should be assessed to achieve a balanced evaluation, and all possible evidence of scholarly activities and capabilities should be sought, including published materials in refereed journals, unpublished manuscripts accepted for publication, and impactful non-peer-reviewed works such as white papers, community needs assessments/reports, policy briefs, interviews and podcasts.

3.1.5 Teaching

Teaching involves the dissemination of knowledge and the development of skills and abilities in our learners, who can be students, graduates, faculty, staff, or community members. These aims are achieved through formal lectures, supervised experiential learning, demonstrations and modeled behaviors, small-group education, and one-to-one instruction, provided through in-person, online or hybrid modalities. The development, implementation, and assessment of new teaching materials, course designs, and new technologies to promote learning are important contributions to teaching. Teaching may occur in the SOPH, other schools and colleges throughout VCU, the health system, the community, through professional organizations, and in other settings. The candidate should demonstrate the ability to mentor or lead students to think purposefully and critically, to broaden the student's interest, to seek out innovative techniques where appropriate, and to transmit knowledge effectively to students, staff, patients, professionals, and the public.

3.1.6 Service

Service includes the development, implementation, execution and evaluation of policies, procedures and programs necessary to conduct departmental, school, university and community activities, as well as professional activities not directly related to the faculty member's scholarly activity. The quantity and quality of the candidate's service should be carefully assessed. All faculty must share in the work necessary to maintain operations in the Department, School and University, appropriately based on the expectations of their position. As partial demonstration of the two-way commitment between the SOPH and Tenured faculty, the latter are expected to take and maintain service leadership positions in their Department, the School, or the University.

3.1.8 Workload Distribution

Promotion in the SOPH is dependent upon continuing achievement in teaching, scholarly activity, and service. The amount and distribution of scholarship, teaching and mentoring, and service responsibilities are to be specified in the notice of appointment, must be specified in the letter of appointment and all subsequent contract letters, and must comply with the provisions specified in the [SOPH Effort Distribution Policy](#). Faculty should receive written notice from their department Chair for any changes in their effort distribution. Department Chairs should review with the faculty member the allocation of the faculty member's effort at least annually, provide feedback to each faculty member in writing, as part of the annual evaluation process. The Department Chair will submit a document

containing the faculty member's effort distribution for each year under review to the departmental peer review committee.

3.2 Unit Criteria

See Appendix II for examples of meritorious accomplishments at each rank for the domains of teaching and mentoring, scholarship and service. Also consult the School of Public Health Statement on [Teaching and Research Excellence](#).

Instructor: An individual who has attained the basic degree in a specific discipline or field, who should have potential for promotion to Assistant Professor. Instructors are engaged in teaching, as well as providing a service activity that serves as a framework for teaching or supervising students in an academic setting. This appointment is for a term of one year and is renewable.

Assistant Professor: For appointment at or promotion to this rank, a candidate should have:

- (1) the highest appropriate degree in a specific discipline or field
- (2) demonstrated professional competence in a specific discipline or field
- (3) demonstrated potential for teaching, service and scholarship. Review by a departmental committee is not required for promotion from instructor to assistant professor; in this case, the Chair must submit the candidate's curriculum vitae, bibliography, faculty data sheet, and documentation that all of the requirements listed above have been met satisfactorily to the Dean.

Initial appointments at or promotions to rank of Assistant Professor should be made only for persons who show promise for promotion to higher ranks.

Associate Professor:

(1) General

The performance of the candidate should indicate a sustained record of professional achievements in teaching, scholarship and service, with a demonstrated trend toward national or international prominence. Examples of satisfactory and excellent performance are provided in Appendix II. Although candidates must achieve a balance between teaching, scholarship and service, the apportionment of teaching, scholarship and service responsibilities should be given consideration in the overall assessment.

(2) Academic Credentials and Experience

The candidate must hold a terminal degree in an appropriate discipline, plus postgraduate training, where such training is appropriate. As a general rule, the candidate should have held appointment as Assistant Professor for a minimum of three years before being considered for appointment to Associate Professor.

(3) Teaching

The candidate should demonstrate contributions to the educational mission of the SOPH and their Department, including contributions to courses, curriculum design, implementation, or assessment, or teaching through professional organizations. The candidate should have successfully served as a mentor or advisor of students, colleagues, or postdoctoral trainees.

(4) Scholarship

The candidate should demonstrate maturity and professional competence in independent scholarship or as a leader in collaborative research that should lead to publication of new knowledge. Publications in refereed journals, books and book chapters, sustained for a number of years, will be used as a guideline for measuring scholarly achievement and growth. For faculty whose major contribution is in research, funding for research efforts, service to study sections, review committees or invitations to referee or provide editorial duties for national or international scientific journals also reflect the candidate's achievements and recognition in their area of expertise.

(5) Service

The candidate is expected to demonstrate contributions in service to their Department, the SOPH, the University, the community, and their profession as outlined under the general guidelines above.

Professor

(1) General

Promotion to the rank of Professor is based upon sustained and increasingly impactful achievements in teaching, service, and scholarship, with national or international recognition in at least one of these areas. Examples of satisfactory and excellent performance are provided in Appendix II. Although candidates must achieve a balance between teaching, scholarship and service, the apportionment of teaching, scholarship and service responsibilities should be given consideration in the overall assessment.

(2) Academic Credentials and Experience

The candidate must hold a terminal degree in an appropriate discipline, plus postgraduate training, where such training is appropriate. As a general rule, the candidate should have held appointment as Associate Professor for a minimum of three years before being considered for appointment to Professor.

(3) Teaching

The candidate should demonstrate continued contributions to improvements and innovation in the educational mission of the School of Public Health and in their Department. The candidate should have successfully served as the mentor or advisor of students, colleagues, and/or postdoctoral trainees. Examples of national recognition for teaching include editing or writing a textbook, being an invited speaker at national meetings, national awards, publications, lectures or consulting, national impact on teaching methods or assessment, national funding of training grants or instructional programs, participation in national or international committees that develop educational programs or credentialing or certifying examinations.

(4) Scholarship

The candidate should have demonstrated a sustained pattern of scholarly productivity. The candidate's publication record should be distinguished by originality and creativity, including peer-reviewed articles in journals, reviews and book chapters. Funding for research efforts, service to national study sections, review committees or invitation to referee or provide editorial duties for national or international scientific

journals also reflects the candidate's achievements and recognition in his or her area of expertise. The candidate should have demonstrated an appropriate degree of collaboration as evidenced, for example, by the initiation of formal cooperative research ventures with colleagues, or served as a resource for junior faculty within the institution. National recognition of scholarship must be corroborated by external scientists of outstanding reputation.

(5) Service

The candidate should demonstrate continued contributions in administrative service and assume a leadership role at the Department, SOPH, University, community, and/or national levels. The candidate should actively participate in their profession outside of the university. National recognition of service includes awards, publications, lectures, consulting, adoption of new clinical or administrative programs or processes at a national level and participation in national committees, programs, or panels relating to public health sciences or academic medicine.

4.1.1 Committee Formation

Departmental Peer Review Committee Composition: A departmental peer review committee is formed by the Department Chair, with approval from the Dean's Office, to review a faculty member for promotion or tenure or both. The peer review committee will consist of at least five (5) voting members, with at least three faculty members from the department (where possible) and at least two faculty members outside the department or school. Committee members must hold an academic rank the same as or higher than the rank proposed for the candidate. For review of a term faculty member, at least one committee member must be term faculty. If a member of the peer review committee believes they cannot provide an impartial assessment, they should withdraw immediately from the committee by notifying in writing the Dean's Office, the Department Chair, and the Chair of the Departmental peer review committee.

The Department Chair will select the Chair of the Departmental Peer Review Committee, and shall notify the candidate in writing of the proposed committee composition. The candidate shall have the right to challenge any member of the committee, with such challenge made in writing to both the Departmental Chair and the Dean's Office within five working days following the date the candidate is notified of the committee composition. If the candidate and the Department Chair cannot resolve the challenge, the school governance committee will adjudicate the challenge and set the final committee roster. Any challenges submitted in writing will be returned to the candidate upon resolution of the challenge. Potential committee members will not be notified until membership has been finalized.

4.1.2 Evaluation Process

A minimum of three committee meetings will be held: an initial organization and planning meeting, a meeting to discuss evaluations, and final meeting in which to vote on, complete and sign the committee report. The Committee Chair is responsible for scheduling the timing and modality (ex. in-person, online) for each meeting. All proceedings will be confidential and members of the committee will not at any time discuss the proceedings outside the committee meetings. The committee quorum will consist of at least four members at the first two meetings, while all members will attend the final meeting.

At the initial organization and planning meeting, the Committee will assign roles, generate a list of potential external reviewers, and discuss University, School and Departmental promotion and tenure guidelines. The Committee Chair will facilitate and assign specific responsibilities for each member. Although the candidate prepares an initial list of potential referees, the Committee will subsequently enlarge this list; no more than 50% of external independent review letters may be from reviewers suggested by the candidate. Specific dates for all

subsequent Committee activities will be agreed upon during this meeting, and must be in adherence with the timeline provided in Appendix I to ensure compliance with all Departmental, School and University timelines.

Following the first meeting and prior to the second meeting, the committee may request additional information from the candidate, and may interview the department Chair (or authorized representative) or other faculty who might have information that would aid the committee in its deliberations. These interviews may be used to obtain information on the areas to be evaluated, but will not be used to obtain opinions on the decision concerning promotion or tenure; those called by the committee will be apprised of this fact.

The Committee will keep a record of the names of all potential referees, an indication of whether the referee was successfully contacted (including the number attempts at contact), an indication of whether the referee agreed to provide a reference letter, an indication of whether that reference letter was received, and all relevant dates. Also included in these records shall be the type of referee (internal or external) and their relationship to the candidate (colleague or independent). The committee will note that only letters of evaluation from independent external referees are required for the review process; internal colleagues or external collaborators should only provide letters of clarification to assist the committee in understanding and contextualizing the candidate's role and responsibilities.

At the evaluation meeting, the Committee will discuss the candidate's merits for promotion (and/or tenure, if applicable), and will discuss the Committee's evaluation letter; while the goal is to complete the evaluation letter at this meeting, some editorial actions may be conducted following this meeting. Member reports on specific areas of evaluation (credentials and experience, research, teaching and mentoring, and service) will be made in writing and presented to and discussed with the entire committee during this meeting, though this material should be shared with the Committee prior to that meeting.

At the final meeting, each committee member will provide, in writing, a secret vote. Once tabulated, the final voting sheet will be signed by each committee member. The Committee will also complete and approve the Committee evaluation letter.

Section 4.3.1 Committee Election and Term of Office

The SOPH shall have a School Promotion and Tenure (PnT) Review Committee consisting of four (4) faculty members, with one member from each Department in the School of Public Health. Three members will be tenured faculty and one member will be term (non-tenure) faculty, and all will have the rank of Professor or Associate Professor. Members of the School Promotion and Tenure Committee may not serve on a Departmental promotion and tenure peer review committee, nor can they hold an administrative title at the level of departmental Chair or above. The Dean may appoint additional members following election of the Committee.

The Dean's Office will annually prepare a slate of candidates for open positions on the School of Public Health (SOPH) PnT Review Committee. This slate will be submitted to the faculty for approval with write-in candidates allowed. The majority of those voting will constitute approval of the slate. Only full-time faculty members shall be eligible to vote. Each year the committee shall elect a Chairperson from its members.

4.3.2 Evaluation Process

The SOPH PnT Review Committee will review all recommendations and material submitted by each Departmental Peer Review Committee, including the Chair's letter of evaluation. The SOPH PnT Review Committee may request additional information from the Chair, the Departmental Peer Review Committee, or from the candidate. For each candidate, the SOPH PnT Review Committee will make an independent recommendation based upon the guidelines

and criteria set forth by the candidate's Department and the School of Public Health, and submit their recommendation signed by all committee members.

3.0 PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THIS DOCUMENT

Consideration of changes to this document may be initiated at the request of the Dean, the SOPH Promotion and Tenure Review Committee, or at least twenty (20) percent of the tenured and tenure-eligible faculty in the SOPH. An ad hoc committee to consider the proposed changes and to make recommendations on these and any other changes will be appointed by the Dean's Office. Any changes require the approval of a majority of the voting faculty (see School of Public Health Bylaws) and the University Promotions and Tenure Review Committee.

Approved by the School of Public Health Faculty: March 27, 2024

Amendments approved by the School of Public Health Faculty: August 21, 2026

APPENDIX I

Timetable for Promotion and Tenure Decision Activities

<i>Dean notifies Department Chair of impending tenure or promotion review</i>	<i>on or before March 1</i>
<i>Department Chair provides (to the Dean's Office) (i) confirmed or amended list of faculty members to be reviewed and (ii) Departmental Tenure and/or Promotion Committee constituted</i>	<i>on or before April 1</i>
<i>Dean approval of committees returned to departments</i>	<i>on or before May 1</i>
<i>Supporting documents due to Departmental Committee</i>	<i>on or before June 1</i>
<i>Departmental committees solicit requests for external letters of reference</i>	<i>on or before July 1</i>
<i>Draft report of departmental committee drafted</i>	<i>on or before October 1</i>
<i>Final report of the departmental committee due to department Chair</i>	<i>on or before October 15</i>
<i>Final report of departmental committee and Chair letter of support submitted to the Dean's Office</i>	<i>on or before November 1</i>
<i>Report of the School of Public Health Promotion and Tenure Committee submitted to the Dean's Office</i>	<i>on or before January 15</i>
<i>File, with Dean's letter, submitted to Provost's Office</i>	<i>on or before February 1</i>
<i>Reviewed and Approved by May VCU Board of Visitors</i>	<i>to be effective July 1</i>
<i>Candidates are notified by a letter from the President to their home address after the May VCU BOV meeting</i>	

APPENDIX II

Tables with Examples of Accomplishments to be Considered for Promotion in Each Category

These lists are not intended to be all inclusive. The number and types of contributions should be weighted by the faculty member's mix of duties.

<i>Table 1 Research and Scholarship: examples of accomplishments for consideration of promotion</i>			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Assistant Professor</i>	-Independence from training mentor -Author of manuscripts of original research submitted for peer-review -Author of non-peer reviewed documents pending release -Co-author of posters or oral presentations at national meetings -Pending applications to fund sufficient levels of support to conduct original research	-Author of peer-reviewed publications of original research -Author of non-peer reviewed documents -Author of posters or oral presentations at national meetings -Awarded projects with efforts to conduct original research	-Author of peer-reviewed publications of high-impact original research -Author of non-peer reviewed high-impact documents -Author of award-winning posters or oral presentations at national meetings -Externally-awarded projects with sufficient efforts to conduct original research
<i>Associate Professor (Criteria for Assistant Professor plus the following)</i>		-Research mentor of staff and students	-Research mentor of and providing funding for staff and students
<i>Professor (Criteria for Associate Professor plus the following)</i>		-Research mentor of other faculty	-Research mentor of and providing funding for other faculty

**This list is not intended to be exhaustive. The number, type and quality of contributions should be (i) further specified in the candidate's Departmental PnT Guidelines, and (ii) weighted by the faculty member's particular effort allocation.*

<i>Table 2 Teaching and Mentoring: examples of accomplishments for consideration of promotion</i>			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Assistant Professor</i>	-Teaching didactic courses as directed -Serving on capstone, thesis or dissertation committees	-Teaching didactic courses with positive evaluations -Chairing capstone, thesis or dissertation committees	-Teaching didactic courses with excellent evaluations -Chairing capstone, thesis or dissertation committees that lead to disseminatable material -Departmental teaching or mentoring award
<i>Associate Professor (Criteria for Assistant Professor plus the following)</i>	-Offering seminars or public lectures -Co-author of textbook chapter -Mentee apply for training/fellowship award	-Offering or creating new didactic courses -Author of a textbook chapter -Mentee serves on training grant	-Offering or creating new didactic courses that become formally incorporated into a training program -Author of a textbook -Mentee awarded externally-funded training/fellowship award -School-wide teaching or mentoring award
<i>Professor (Criteria for Associate Professor plus the following)</i>	-Teaching material and tools made publicly available	-Teaching material and tools presented at national conferences -Pending training grant as Principal Investigator	-Teaching material and tools published in peer-reviewed journal -Awarded training grant as Principal Investigator -University teaching or mentoring award

**This list is not intended to be exhaustive. The number, type and quality of contributions should be (i) further specified in the candidate's Departmental PnT Guidelines, and (ii) weighted by the faculty member's particular effort allocation.*

<i>Table 3 Service: examples of accomplishments for consideration of promotion</i>			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>Assistant Professor</i>	-Member of departmental committee -Review manuscripts for peer review journal		
<i>Associate Professor (Criteria for Assistant Professor plus the following)</i>		-Member of school committee -Committee member of national research or education organization	-Chair of departmental committee -Member of grant study section -Associate Editor for peer review journal
<i>Professor (Criteria for Associate Professor plus the following)</i>		-Member of university committee -Committee chair of national research or education organization	-Chair of university committee -Chair of grant study section -Editor for peer review journal

**This list is not intended to be exhaustive. The number, type and quality of contributions should be (i) further specified in the candidate's Departmental PnT Guidelines, and (ii) weighted by the faculty member's particular effort allocation.*