

Faculty Handbook
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville



Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

AMENDMENT

Effective August 1, 2026

This amendment revises Handbook sections in Chapter 3 that pertain to retention reviews of tenure-track Faculty.

Section headers marked with * have not been affected. Section 3.11.5 and following have not been affected. Please consult the Handbook (effective September 8, 2025) for content of those sections.

3.0 Board of Trustees Policy*

3.1 Process for Appointment of New Faculty to Tenure-track Positions

1. The department head or dean, where there is no department, obtains authorization to search for a new tenure-track faculty member after consultation regarding the needs of the program with departmental faculty, the dean, and the chief academic officer of the university. An authorization to search does not necessitate appointment, as financial conditions within the university or the inability to hire an appropriate candidate may prevent appointment.
2. A thorough search and careful selection must precede any departmental recommendation of appointment. As part of this process, departmental faculty nominate potential search committee members from which the department head selects a search committee in consultation with the tenured and tenure-track faculty. It is the department head's responsibility to assure appropriate search committee representation in accordance with departmental bylaws and university search procedures. The search committee recommends the applicant pool and identifies candidates to be considered for interviews. The tenured and tenure-track faculty will evaluate and vote on the candidates and make a recommendation to the department head. The head will then recommend a candidate to the dean. If the dean agrees with the recommendation, the dean will then recommend the candidate to the chief academic officer, who will then make a recommendation to the chancellor. If the head's recommendation diverges from that of the faculty, the head must explain their reasons in detail to the faculty, who have the right to meet with the dean and chief academic officer about the recommendation.
3. Following the decision to recommend appointment, the head and prospective faculty member typically discuss informally rank, salary, and other terms of employment. Such discussions inform the recommendations of the department head but do not constitute a binding commitment by the university.
4. Notification of appointment is made by letter from the chief academic officer. This appointment letter specifies (a) rank, (b) salary and related financial conditions, (c) the academic year during which a tenure decision must be reached, (d) general duties and expectations, and (e) the home department, in the case of joint appointments. Correspondence between the department head, dean, and prospective faculty member concerning these matters is unofficial and not binding on the university.
5. Written acceptance of the letter of appointment, together with execution of normal university employment forms, completes the initial appointment. The employment of tenure-track faculty members is governed by the terms of the appointment letter, applicable provisions of this handbook, and applicable provisions of university policies and procedures.
6. Working with the probationary faculty member, the department head assigns a faculty mentor or a mentoring committee for each tenure-track faculty member. The mentor should be a senior member of the same department or another unit, who can serve as a model and as a source of information for the tenure-track faculty member. Department heads should not serve as mentors for faculty within their own departments. The mentor or mentoring committee may participate in the annual retention review in a manner to be determined in collegiate and/or departmental bylaws.

3.2 Criteria for Appointment to Faculty Rank*

3.3 Classifications of Appointment*

3.4 Special Faculty Titles*

3.5 Joint and Intercampus Appointments*

3.6 Summer Appointments*

3.7 Faculty Duties and Workload*

3.8 Faculty Review and Evaluation*

3.8.1 Annual Performance and Planning Review (APPR)

3.8.1.1 Rating Scale to be Applied in Evaluating Faculty Performance*

3.8.1.2 Timetable for APPR

Each faculty member at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is evaluated annually on their performance during the previous three academic years. Each faculty member at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture is evaluated annually on their performance during the previous three calendar years. In either case, the three-year period is referred to as the “Evaluation Period.” For each tenured or tenure-track faculty member at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the APPR will be completed in the fall semester of each academic year, as set forth in the Faculty Evaluation Calendar. For each tenured or tenure-track faculty member at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, the APPR will be completed in the spring semester of each academic year, as set forth in the Faculty Evaluation Calendar.

3.8.1.3 APPR for Tenure-Track Faculty Members

For tenure-track faculty members, the APPR described in section 3.8.1 will also include consultation of the department head with the tenured departmental faculty. The tenured departmental faculty will meet to confer regarding the faculty member’s performance and will then write a report to the department head that will contain a list of the participating tenured faculty members and suggestions for enhancing the faculty member’s progress toward the grant of tenure. In addition to the APPR, tenure-track faculty members receive an enhanced review with retention vote by the tenured department faculty typically no later than the fourth year of their tenure-track appointment. See below, Section 3.11.4.3.

3.8.2 Procedures for the APPR*

3.8.3 Right to Appeal an APPR*

3.8.4 Periodic Post-Tenure Performance Review (PPPR)*

3.8.5 Enhanced Post-Tenure Performance Review (EPPR)*

3.9 Salary*

3.10 Promotion*

3.11 Tenure*

3.11.1 Definition of Tenure*

3.11.2 Eligibility for Tenure Consideration*

3.11.3 Tenure upon Initial Appointment*

3.11.4 Probationary Period*

3.11.4.1 Length of the Probationary Period*

3.11.4.2 Notice of Non-Renewal*

3.11.4.3 Enhanced Tenure-Track Review and Retention Vote

For each tenure-track faculty member, the department and department head will conduct an enhanced review to assess and inform the faculty member of their progress toward the grant of tenure during the third or fourth year of the probationary period, which may be extended past the fourth year of the probationary period for any faculty member who has been granted an extension of the probationary period (with the year to be determined by the department head after consultation with the faculty member and the faculty member's mentor or mentoring committee). In colleges without departments, the dean may also fulfill the functions of the department head, or may appoint someone within the college (for example, an associate dean), as stipulated in the college's bylaws.

The tenured departmental faculty will meet and confer regarding the faculty member's performance and will then write a report to the department head that will contain a list of the participating tenured faculty members; suggestions for enhancing the faculty member's progress toward the grant of tenure; the majority and minority report, if applicable; and the summary anonymous vote on whether the faculty member should be retained. The department head will present and discuss the tenured faculty's report, as well as their own written assessment, with the faculty member. Copies of the ETTR documents will be given to the faculty member. A favorable ETTR does not commit the tenured departmental faculty, the department, or the college to a subsequent recommendation for the grant of tenure.

A. Departmental Procedures for the Retention Review

1. Schedule: Each tenure-track faculty member will be reviewed no later than in the fall of their fourth year of appointment. Extensions can be granted as discussed above.

2. Preparation for Enhanced Tenure Track Review: the faculty member will, with the guidance and counsel of the department head, prepare and submit to the department head (for distribution to the tenured faculty) a file on their cumulative performance, reflecting their degree of progress in satisfying the requirements for tenure in teaching, research / scholarship / creative activity, and service. The file must contain all relevant elements of sections B, C, and D of the P&T dossier (detailed in the appendix of the faculty Handbook) as well as the faculty member's Annual Performance and Planning materials from prior years.
3. Review and vote by the tenured faculty: The tenured departmental faculty will review the files submitted by the faculty member and solicit input from the faculty member's mentor or mentoring committee. The tenured faculty's review will rely on and include documented and substantiated information available to the tenured faculty at the time of the review and will not be based on rumor or speculation. After reviewing and discussing the faculty member's progress towards tenure and promotion, including teaching performance; program of disciplinary research / scholarship / creative activity; and record of institutional, disciplinary, and professional service, and taking into account criteria and metrics stipulated in the unit's bylaws, the tenured faculty will take an anonymous vote on whether the faculty member should be retained. Upon completion of the retention meeting, the faculty will submit a report summarizing the discussion and addressing progress toward tenure. The report will contain the tally of the anonymous vote, a list of the participating tenured faculty members, and suggestions for enhancing the faculty member's progress toward the grant of tenure. The tenured faculty will share the majority report and, should there be one, minority report, with the department head.
4. The department head's review: The department head will present and discuss the tenured faculty's report, as well as their own independent written assessment, with the faculty member. In cases where the decision is positive, the department head will provide guidance to the faculty member on continuing the path toward tenure. If the ETTR review results in a recommendation not to retain the tenure-track faculty member, the department head includes in the report specific reasons for that decision.
5. Dissemination of the ETTR Report: The department head will provide the faculty member with a copy of the finalized ETTR Report, including the department head's retention report and recommendation. The department head will furnish the tenured faculty with a copy of the department head's retention report and recommendation.
6. Dissenting statements: Upon receipt of the finalized ETTR report, any member of the tenured faculty may submit a dissenting statement to the department head. A copy of the dissenting statement will be furnished to the faculty member under review. The dissenting statement will be attached to the ETTR Report.
7. Faculty member's review and response to the ETTR Report: The faculty member reviews the ETTR Report. The faculty member's signature indicates that they have read the entire evaluation, but the signature does not necessarily imply agreement with its findings. The faculty member under review has the right to submit a written response to the vote and narrative of the tenured faculty, to the report and recommendation of the department head, and/or to any dissenting statements and is allowed 14 calendar days from the date of receipt from the head of the finalized ETTR Report to do so. If no response is received after 14

calendar days of the date of receipt, the faculty member relinquishes the right to respond. For good cause, and upon approval by the chief academic officer, the response time may be extended once for an additional 14 days.

B. Dean's Review of the ETTR Report

1. The dean's review and recommendation: The dean makes an independent review and recommendation on retention after reviewing the ETTR Report. The dean will prepare a statement summarizing their recommendation when it differs from that of the department head or tenured faculty or stating any other concerns the dean might wish to record, as appropriate.
2. Transmission of the dean's recommendation and statement: The dean will indicate their recommendation for retention or non-retention on the ETTR Report, attach their statement, if any, and forward the ETTR Report with its complete set of attachments to the chief academic officer. The dean will send a copy of their recommendation and statement, if any, to the department head and the faculty member.
3. Faculty member's and department head's right to respond: The faculty member and / or the department head have the right to submit to the chief academic officer a written response to the dean's ETTR recommendation or any accompanying statement. Any response by the faculty member should be copied to the dean and the department head. Similarly, any response by the department head should be copied to the dean and the faculty member. The faculty member and the department head will be allowed 14 calendar days from the date of receipt of the dean's recommendation to submit any written response. If no response is received after 14 calendar days from the date of receipt, the faculty member or department head, as applicable, relinquishes the right to respond.

C. Chief Academic Officer's Review of Recommendations for Retention

1. The chief academic officer's review: The chief academic officer will review the ETTR recommendation, make the final decision on retention, and indicate their decision on retention on the ETTR Report. The chief academic officer sends a copy of the fully executed ETTR Report to the faculty member with copies to the dean and department head.
2. Notification in cases of non-retention: If the chief academic officer decides that the faculty member will not be retained, they will give the faculty member written notice of non-renewal in accordance with the notice requirements described in Section 3.11.4.2 above. The faculty member is entitled to a statement in writing of the reasons for the non-renewal decision. This statement, together with any subsequent correspondence concerning the reasons, is a part of the official record.

3.11.4.4 Right to Appeal

The faculty member may appeal the outcome of the retention review or the ETTR under the general appeals procedures outlined in Chapter 5 of the *Faculty Handbook*. According to Board Policies Governing Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure, the final decision on an appeal of the outcome of a retention review or ETTR lies with the chancellor and is not appealable to the president.