

**Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTC SOM)**  
**Faculty Affairs Guidelines Section Four- Promotion of Faculty in the Non-Tenure Track**

**Administrator: Shari A. Whicker, EdD, (Interim) Dean, Faculty Affairs**

**Original date: July 2014**

**Most Recent Revision: July 2025**

**1 Purpose**

**To ensure that all faculty promotions follow all requirements stipulated in the VTC SOM faculty bylaws and guidelines as well as the corresponding guidelines of the Virginia Tech faculty handbook.**

**2 Guidelines**

**I. Non-Tenure Track**

Promotion on the non-tenure track most often affects two ranks-Assistant Professors seeking to be promoted to Associate Professor, and Associate Professors seeking to be promoted to full Professor. Candidates for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor must demonstrate ***significant progress*** in the chosen domains of faculty activity. Candidates for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor must demonstrate ***excellence*** in the chosen domains of faculty activity.

Except where otherwise noted, the promotion process shall recognize and reflect the individual faculty member's current involvement in all four domains of faculty activity and the achievement of significant progress and/or excellence over time within two of the four domains of faculty activity. As applicable, faculty should show sustained, and preferably increasing, scholarly activity as their career progresses.

Teaching is a core expectation of all VTC SOM faculty. Peer observation of teaching is also a time-honored tradition of Virginia Tech. All candidates for promotion in the non-tenure track must undergo a process of peer evaluation of teaching. This process involves working with a faculty peer observer selected by the candidate. Peer observation is offered by the TEACH Academy; or the candidate may choose an observer within one's own academic department. A key component of the process is the provision of feedback on how teaching performance can be improved. Candidates for promotion on the non-tenure track will be expected to undergo this process twice during the time period prior to each promotion sought. The two peer reviews must represent different points of time in the review period and differing instructional events. Documentation of these peer reviews must be included in the promotion dossier (see observation guidelines provided by the Office of Faculty Affairs).

VTC SOM values collaboration as critically important to academic work in all settings. To recognize and reward faculty members who assume collaborative roles and/or perform collaborative work across disciplines, colleges and/or fields of interest, VTC SOM invites evidence of collaboration as an important component of the promotion review process. Letters regarding potential promotion should feature documentation of collaborative activity undertaken by the faculty candidate.

**I.A. Assistant Professor to Associate Professor**

Candidates on the non-tenure track at this rank should demonstrate significant progress in academic activity. There is no specific time limit to this rank. It is expected that the candidate will be active in the domains of academic duty-teaching, clinical care (if relevant), scholarship, and service. For the clinician candidate, significant progress

should be evident in at least two of these domains; for the non-clinician candidate, significant progress should also be evident in two domains, one of which must be research/scholarly activity.

Each candidate is judged on abilities in *Teaching*. There must be documentation of teaching activities and good to excellent evaluations of performance from students, peers, block or rotation directors, administrators, or others. For this to be a domain with significant progress, evaluations should be exemplary and the quantity of teaching considerable. Innovation and creativity in teaching is helpful. Teaching awards and requests by learners for additional teaching contact are also evidence of significant progress. Non-clinician candidates may submit evaluations from former post-doctoral trainees, graduate students, or pre-clinical students working in the candidate's area of scholarship.

For the clinician candidate, there must be documentation of *Clinical Care* in the presence of learners. Metrics of clinical abilities such as surveys, questionnaires, and "scorecards" are helpful for a broad picture, but the provision of clinical care is not relevant to promotion without occurring as an attending physician or preceptor in the presence of learners. Significant progress in clinical care must also show evidence of considerable clinical teaching time. Significant progress in clinical care must also show evidence of leadership in areas of clinical practice activity, clinical techniques or operations, or patient advocacy.

Each candidate must show evidence of significant progress in *Scholarly Activity/Research*; there must be sustained, and preferably increasing, examples of scholarship in the dossier. To demonstrate significant progress there must be evidence of more than one type of scholarship. Candidates for promotion to Associate Professor must show publications in journals, books, online collections, or other sites beyond local outlets. The candidate must also produce examples of scholarly presentations at regional and/or national meetings. The candidate may wish to demonstrate other scholarship that has been distributed, even if not in published forms. The scholarship must be sustained, and preferably increasing, over time and with increasing evidence of expertise. evaluation Showing sustained funding in support of scholarship is noteworthy and should be demonstrated wherever possible. Candidates should also be recognized by peers as a thought leader as evidenced by positions of responsibility in their professional area.

All faculty members must provide *Service* to the School, the hospitals or research institutes, the community or the broader medical community. Examples of service must be included in the dossier. To demonstrate significant progress, the candidate must include leadership in service activities such as chair, chief, director, or coordinator, innovative or creative applications to the work involved, or new initiatives addressing school, local, regional, national and/or international issues. Certain areas of service, such as Boards of national or international organizations, requests to participate in national or international task forces, or research study groups are examples of significant progress in service. Service must reflect on the mission and activities of VTCSOM; service by the faculty member in an otherwise laudable activity that is not congruent with the mission and activities of VTCSOM is not relevant to the academic promotion process.

Both the department Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Tenure (APRT) committee and the VTCSOM Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) committee will judge each candidate on the totality of the promotion dossier. While the totality of scholarship is relevant, recent evidence of scholarship is also expected.

#### Letters of Evaluation

##### Assistant Professor to Associate Professor

The dossier of the candidate for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor on the non-tenure track must include at least two letters of evaluation. At least one of these letters must come from outside

academic institutions, preferably those who are Virginia Tech peer institutions. To elicit these letters, the candidate is permitted to forward to the chair of the department Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Tenure (APRT) committee up to four names of persons who may be appropriate to write letters. The candidate should consider including one or more local persons who would be able to comment from personal knowledge on the candidate's teaching, clinical and service abilities. All letters of evaluation must be received from persons at the rank of Associate Professor or higher. Members of a departmental APRT Committee may not write letters of evaluation for inclusion in promotion dossiers.

Letters of evaluation are always solicited by the chair of the departmental APRT Committee, never by the candidate. Promotion candidates are not allowed to know the identity of persons who ultimately write internal or external review letters. There is to be no contact of any kind between the candidate and any person who writes internal or external review letters: contact between candidates and letter writers may lead to disqualification of the candidate from further consideration until a future promotion cycle.

External letters must come from entities outside of Carilion Clinic, Virginia Tech and Radford University and, in some cases, the Salem VA Medical Center. The Department APRT Committee must balance the letters such that there is no more than one letter from the individuals whose names were forwarded by the candidate him/herself. The committee must ensure that at least two letters are available for review. All letters received must be included in the promotion dossier, regardless of whether a given letter meets criteria. Departmental APRT committees shall solicit the letters in accordance with university and VTCSOM guidelines for the solicitation of such letters, including furnishing the potential letter writers with key information concerning the VTCSOM promotion requirements. Guidelines for the processes of soliciting and preparing letters of evaluation are provided by the VTCSOM Office of Faculty Affairs; see website for a recommended template.

### **1.B Associate Professor to Professor**

Candidates on the non-tenure track at this rank must demonstrate excellence for consideration of promotion. There is no specific time limit at this rank. It is expected that the candidate will be active in all domains of academic activity-teaching, clinical care (if relevant), scholarship, and service. For the clinician candidate, excellence must be evident in at least two of these domains; for the non-clinician candidate, excellence must also be evident in two domains, one of which must be research/scholarly activity.

Each candidate is judged on abilities in *Teaching*. There must be documentation of teaching activities and good to excellent evaluations of performance from students, peers, block or rotation directors, administrators, or others. For this to be a domain with excellence, evaluations should be exemplary. Innovation and creativity are expected. Participation in teaching efforts in a leadership role is expected. Teaching awards are evidence of excellence. Requests by learners for additional teaching contact are also evidence of excellence. Non-clinician candidates may submit evaluations from former post-doctoral trainees, graduate students, or pre-clinical students working in the candidate's area of scholarship. The non-clinician candidate must have sponsored or mentored a number of trainees (e.g., medical students, doctoral candidates, post-doctoral trainees) in the area of expertise.

For the clinician candidate, there must be documentation of *Clinical Care* in the presence of learners. Metrics of clinical abilities such as surveys, questionnaires, and "scorecards" are helpful for a broad picture, but even excellent clinical care is not relevant to promotion without occurring as an attending physician or preceptor in the presence of learners. Excellence in clinical care must show evidence of considerable clinical teaching time. The candidate must also demonstrate involvement in at least one leadership role in the clinical domain. Awards or other recognitions are also evidence of excellence in clinical care.

Each candidate should show excellence in *Scholarly Activity/Research*; there must be sustained examples of

scholarship in the dossier. To demonstrate excellence there should be evidence of more than one type of scholarship. Candidates for promotion to Professor must show dissemination of scholarly work through substantial publications in journals, books, online collections, or other sites beyond local outlets since promotion to Associate Professor. The candidate must also produce examples of scholarly presentations at national and/or international meetings. The scholarship must be sustained, and preferably increasing, over time and with increasing evidence of expertise in the area(s) of focus. The candidate may wish to demonstrate other scholarship that has been distributed, even if not in published forms. Showing sustained funding in support of scholarship is noteworthy and should be demonstrated wherever possible. Candidates should be recognized as a thought leader as evidenced by positions of responsibility in their professional area.

Faculty members must provide *Service* to the School, the hospitals or research institutes, the community or the broader medical community. Examples of service must be included in the dossier. The candidate must demonstrate excellence in service activities, innovative or creative applications to the work involved, or new initiatives addressing school, local, regional, national and/or international issues. Progressive roles as chair, chief, head, director, or other titles are evidence of excellence. Certain areas of service, such as Boards of national or international organizations, requests to participate in national or international task forces, or research study groups are examples of significant progress in service. Service must reflect on the mission and activities of VTCSOM; service by the faculty member in an otherwise laudable activity that is not congruent with the mission and activities of VTCSOM is not relevant to the academic promotion process.

Both the department Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Tenure (APRT) committees and the VTCSOM Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) committee will judge each candidate on the totality of the dossier. While the totality of scholarship is relevant, recent evidence of scholarship is also expected.

#### Letters of Evaluation

##### Associate Professor to Professor

University policy requires that the dossier of the candidate for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor on the non-tenure track must include at a minimum four external letters of evaluation. To elicit these letters, the candidate is permitted to forward to the chair of the department Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Tenure (APRT) committee up to six names of persons who may be appropriate to write letters. All letters of evaluation must be received from persons at the rank of Professor or higher. External letters must come from entities outside of Carilion Clinic, Virginia Tech and Radford University and, in some cases, the Salem VA Medical Center. Members of a departmental APRT Committee may not write letters of evaluation for inclusion in promotion dossiers.

Letters of evaluation are always solicited by the chair of the departmental APRT Committee, never by the candidate. Promotion candidates are not allowed to know the identity of persons who ultimately write internal or external review letters. There is to be no contact of any kind between the candidate and any person who writes internal or external review letters: contact between candidates and letter writers may lead to disqualification of the candidate from further consideration until a future promotion cycle.

The Department APRT Committee must balance the letters such that there is no more than one letter from the individuals whose names were forwarded by the candidate. The committee must ensure that at least four letters are available for review. All letters received must be included in the promotion dossier, regardless of whether a given letter meets criteria. Departmental APRT committees shall solicit the letters in accordance with university and VTCSOM guidelines for the solicitation of such letters, including furnishing the potential letter writers with key information concerning the VTCSOM promotion requirements. Guidelines for the processes of soliciting and preparing letters of evaluation are provided by the VTCSOM Office of Faculty Affairs; see website for a recommended template.

## **II. Other Non-Tenure Track Faculty**

Faculty members who hold primary appointments at either another university or within another college at Virginia Tech may wish to seek promotion of their VTCSOM appointment. In these instances, it is recognized that "rank follows the person," i.e., a person who achieves promotion in rank at the other university or VT college would subsequently hold the same rank at VTCSOM. The promotion in rank must occur at the other college or VT department first. A letter from the VTCSOM department chair (addressed to the Dean) will be sent to the VTCSOM Office of Faculty Affairs, and the promotion will be recognized by VTCSOM via a letter from the Dean. A faculty member cannot hold a higher rank at VTCSOM than the rank at the other university or VT college.

## **III. Clinical Preceptor and Senior Instructor / Instructor Appointments**

Faculty members with these ranks have a primary commitment to the education mission of VTCSOM. They normally have significant instructional roles with students, and may have a basic science, research or clinical practice focus. Faculty members at the rank of clinical preceptor, senior instructor or instructor may apply for promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor in the non-tenure track. There is no promotion process for faculty holding visiting appointments.

### **III.A. Clinical Preceptor to Assistant Professor**

For faculty holding clinical preceptor appointments, the promotion process must reflect that the candidate has made significant progress regarding teaching. There must be documentation of teaching activities and good to excellent evaluations of teaching performance from students, peers, block or rotation directors, administrators, or others.

Other criteria for promotion include those listed below. The clinical instructor must demonstrate service to VTCSOM beyond involvement in clinical activities. A promotion recommendation may be based upon the attainment of some (not necessarily all) of the criteria shown:

- Teaching awards and/or requests by learners for additional teaching contact
- Demonstrated record of service to the academic health center and/or the profession with which s/he is primarily affiliated (e.g., active membership on committees, leadership roles)
- Recognition of service as a role model, advisor and/or mentor to learners (e.g., medical students, resident/fellow physicians, others)
- Participation in programs to improve educational, research or clinical practice
- Participation as a speaker in CME and/or other faculty development activities
- Engagement in the community through activities at the local, regional and/or state level

### **III. B. Senior Instructor to Assistant Professor**

For faculty holding senior instructor appointments, the promotion process must reflect that the candidate has made significant progress regarding teaching. There must be documentation of teaching activities and good to excellent evaluations of teaching performance from students, peers, block or rotation directors, administrators, or others. Non-clinician candidates may also submit evaluations from former post-doctoral trainees, graduate students, or pre-clinical students working in the candidate's area of scholarship.

Other criteria for promotion include those listed below. A promotion recommendation may be based upon the attainment of some (not necessarily all) of the criteria shown:

- Teaching awards and/or requests by learners for additional teaching contact
- Demonstrated record of service to the academic health center and/or the profession with which s/he is primarily affiliated (e.g., active membership on committees)
- Recognition of service as a role model, advisor and/or mentor to learners (e.g., medical students, resident/fellow physicians, masters/doctoral students)
- Participation in programs to improve educational, research or clinical practice
- Participation as a speaker in CME and/or other faculty development activities
- Engagement in the community through activities at the local, regional and/or state level

### **III.C. Instructor to Senior Instructor**

For faculty holding instructor appointments, promotion is predicated on the achievement of a doctoral level degree from a university accredited by the appropriate accreditation body in the US, an equivalent degree, or a terminal degree. Alternatively, promotion of faculty who are not employed by Virginia Tech may be based upon the completion of an advanced degree appropriate for their discipline along with strong, recognized academic achievements in their discipline. Additionally, other criteria for promotion include those listed below. A promotion recommendation may be based upon the attainment of some (not necessarily all) of the criteria shown:

- A stated interest in, and potential for, sustained contribution to a required component of training for learners (e.g., medical students, doctoral students, resident/fellow physicians, learners from other health professions-related educational programs)
- A stated interest in, and potential for, sustained contribution to research/scholarly activity
- Leadership contributions that indicate a continued interest in academic activities and/or an academically-oriented career
- Participation in career advising/mentoring of learners
- Participation in professional development activities

### **Letters of Evaluation**

The promotion dossier of all candidates seeking promotion in rank from either Clinical Preceptor or Senior Instructor/Instructor to Assistant Professor, or candidates seeking promotion from Instructor to Senior Instructor, must include at least two letters of evaluation. All letters of evaluation must be received from persons at the rank of Assistant Professor or higher. To elicit these letters, the candidate is permitted to forward to the chair of the department Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Tenure (APRT) committee up to three names. While the candidate may select individuals from any location and from any source of contact, s/he should consider including one or more local persons who would be able to comment from personal knowledge on the candidate's teaching, clinical and/or service abilities. External letters are not required; but if they are provided, they must come from entities outside of Carilion Clinic, Virginia Tech and Radford University. All letters received must be included in the promotion dossier, regardless of whether a given letter meets criteria.

The Department APRT Committee shall solicit all letters of evaluation. The Department APRT Committee shall choose those individuals from whom letters will be solicited. The committee must ensure that at least two letters are available for review. Departmental APRT committees shall solicit the letters in accordance with university and VTCSOM guidelines for the solicitation of such letters, including furnishing the potential letter writers with key information concerning the VTCSOM promotion requirements. Guidelines for the processes of soliciting and preparing letters of evaluation are provided by the VTCSOM Office of Faculty Affairs; see website for a recommended template.

Both the department Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Tenure (APRT) committees and the VTCSOM Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) committee will judge each candidate on the totality of the dossier.