

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM)

Faculty Affairs Guidelines Section Two – General Requirements for All Promotions; Special Circumstances

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1 Purpose

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

2. Guidelines

I. General Description of Promotion

Promotion is a major way in which VTCSOM rewards a faculty member's contributions and academic achievements. Promotion represents recognition by VTCSOM that the faculty member is engaging in the honored activities of inquiry, research, and discovery.

A candidate for promotion is evaluated by peers at the department and college level and by appropriate administrators at the university level. Care must be taken to ensure that this evaluation is conducted according to openly available criteria and consistent application of those criteria.

The promotion process shall recognize and reflect the individual faculty member's 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.

Faculty shall be made aware at the time of initial faculty appointment of the criteria by which they shall be evaluated for promotion in the track to which they are appointed. Performance assessment must be carried out on an annual basis and contribute to the faculty member's understanding of progress being made toward promotion.

II. **Composition of and Voting by Departmental APRT Committees**

Initial consideration of promotion and/or tenure (tenure or tenure to title) is made at the department level by both the Chair and the department APRT committee. The APRT committee is expected to have a balance of faculty with the rank of Associate Professor and Professor. Decisions concerning promotion from the rank of Assistant to Associate Professor can be voted

upon by the entire committee. While APRT committee members with rank of Associate Professor can be included in the discussion, only those with a rank of Professor can vote when considering promotion from the rank of Associate Professor to Professor.

Regardless of the rank of the Chair, his/her recommendation for promotion is made from the perspective of the Chair. Hence, a Chair can complete a recommendation for promotion regardless of the track or rank of the candidate.

III. General Requirements for Letters of Support

Letters of support provide important perspective on the fulfillment of criteria for the candidate seeking promotion. Letters of support should place the academic and scholarly activities of the candidate in context of other academic institutions. Specifically, letters of support should reflect on the teaching skills of the candidate; comment on the involvement in clinical care with learners present (if relevant), especially during the period for most recent appointment or promotion; address the extent of scholarly productivity; address the relevance of scholarly activity; comment on the leadership abilities and qualities, whether in a local, regional, national or international setting; reflect the local, regional or national reputation of the candidate; and provide perspectives on the character, skills, productivity, scholarly context, or other qualities of the candidate.

It is not expected for every letter of support to address each aspect noted above, nor would the reflective commentator be able to do so. Consequently, it is necessary for the candidate to have several letters in support of his/her candidacy for promotion.

It is required that letters in support of promotion be obtained only from persons who are at or above the academic rank to which the candidate is seeking promotion. It is also required that all letters of support come from persons who have a current faculty appointment in an academic institution, preferably a peer institution of Virginia Tech. Except for the summary letter from the chair of the departmental APRT Committee, members of a departmental APRT Committee may not write letters of support for inclusion in promotion portfolios.

All letters of support must address whether the candidate would meet requirements for promotion at VTCSOM. Optionally, they can also state whether the candidate would meet requirements for the same desired rank/track at the institution of the letter writer, but this does NOT substitute for addressing whether promotion requirements at VTCSOM have been met.

IV. Co-Appointments and Promotion of Co-Appointed Faculty

Faculty who have a co-appointment in a department separate from the department of primary appointment may also apply for promotion in the co-appointment department. These faculty members would need to follow a similar process to promotion within the primary department.

The faculty member should be proposed by the Chair of the co-appointment department. The promotion materials should be assessed by the co-appointment department APRT committee.

It is assumed the material submitted by the faculty member for promotion in the primary department would be relevant to the co-appointment department, though there may be material assessed in closer review by the co-appointment department Chair and/or APRT committee. It is not required that letters of support come from persons in the co-appointment specialty field, though that may help in deliberations by the co-appointment Chair and/or APRT committee.

Consideration for promotion in the co-appointment department may proceed at the same time as consideration for promotion in the primary department or may be considered after a decision is made in the primary department. Promotion in a co-appointment department cannot be made if promotion is not accomplished in the primary department – a faculty member cannot have a higher rank in a co-appointment department than in his/her primary department.

Process for Promotion of a Faculty Member with a Co-Appointment

Promotion of a faculty member within his/her primary department does not automatically mean there is promotion by the department in which he/she has a co-appointment. The department of co-appointment should determine if criteria are met within that department for the faculty member to have equal rank with the primary department. The process is as follows:

- The faculty member would go through the process of promotion in his/her primary department. If successful, he/she could petition the Chair of the department of co-appointment for promotion.
- Assuming the Chair agrees, materials would be submitted to the co-appointment department APRT committee for consideration. In contrast to the process outlined above, new letters of support would not be necessary but the APRT committee would otherwise apply whatever criteria are appropriate in a decision whether to recommend promotion in that department. This decision is not a foregone conclusion; the department of co-appointment may have more stringent criteria than the primary department and, even though the VTCSOM APT committee chose to promote, the department of co-appointment may not.
- If the Chair of the department of co-appointment and the co-appointment departmental APRT Committee both agree to promotion, this decision then may go directly to the Dean, bypassing the APT committee (which had already decided on promotion). The decision of the Dean is final, subject to the further endorsement of the university. It should be noted that this process almost certainly means at least some period of time would elapse between promotion in the primary department and promotion in the department of co-appointment.

V. Process for Promotion of a Department Chair

The process for promotion includes the expectation that the Chair will have demonstrated active involvement in the promotion process of other faculty in his/her department. This includes, but may not be limited to, periodic advice on progress towards promotion, initial review of the promotion materials about to be submitted, and a formal review and recommendation regarding promotion. There is an inherent conflict in asking the department APRT committee to review and eventually recommend for or against promotion of that department's Chair; therefore a modified process for promotion of a Chair is necessary. An important modification is that the Chief Medical Officer of Carilion Clinic, the person to whom the Chair reports for clinical, financial, and administrative responsibilities, functions as the initial recommender for the Chair. The Chief Medical Officer fulfills this role even if his/her rank is lesser than the present or proposed rank of the Chair.

The Chair is expected to collect all materials as stipulated in the promotion requirements for consideration for promotion in a given track and at a given rank. If the Chair requests advice concerning the appropriateness of material in the curriculum vitae and academic portfolio, he/she should seek advice from another Chair, the CMO, or the Senior Dean for Faculty Affairs. The Chair will collect all required materials and submit them to the Chief Medical Officer. The Chief Medical Officer would then make a judgment and write a letter of recommendation. The promotion materials and the Chief Medical Officer letter of recommendation then go directly to the School Appointment, Promotion and Tenure (APT) committee. The departmental APRT committee is bypassed. The APT committee would then have responsibility for collecting letters of support, considering the qualifications for promotion, and directing the recommendation regarding promotion to the Dean. The Dean makes the final decision regarding promotion. A positive recommendation for promotion by the Dean still requires ratification by the Board of Visitors.

Letters of Support

Promotion of a Chair of a Clinical Department

Letters of support for promotion in rank, regardless of track, of a Chair of a Clinical Department must follow the guidelines relevant to the proposed promotion track and rank. However, in all cases, one letter of support for a Chair must be from the Chief Medical Officer for Carilion Clinic.

VI. Promotion Timetable

The only timetable for promotion at VTC SOM relates to faculty on either the tenure or tenure to title tracks. On these tracks, with no interruptions or delays, the assistant professor would typically present his/her credentials at the beginning of the seventh (7th) year following initial appointment. In some circumstances, the faculty member may be ready for promotion in an earlier year, or in the following year depending upon circumstances.

An assistant professor on the tenure track will follow the guidelines for promotion and timetable as specified in university policy; please refer to VTCSOM tenure guidelines SIX.

An assistant professor on the tenure to title track who does not earn promotion and tenure to title after the seventh (7th) year will either re-apply for appointment to VTCSOM in another track (most commonly non-tenure track) or have his/her appointment to VTCSOM suspended. In some circumstances, the assistant professor on the tenure to title track may be qualified to apply for promotion before the seventh (7th) year following initial appointment. Variations to the timetable for assistant professor to associate professor on the tenure to title track may occur as a basis of part-time positions, leaves of absence, sabbaticals, or other types of circumstances or absences.

The time limit for promotion of associate professor to professor on the tenure to title track is ten (10) years. A faculty member in rank as associate professor on the tenure to title track for more than ten (10) years has lost the opportunity to be considered for promotion to professor. This results in a de facto terminal rank of associate professor. While he/she is permitted to remain at that rank as a tenured to title associate professor, he/she is not permitted, at a later date, to apply for promotion to professor.

No timetable applies on the promotion track for non-tenure track faculty at either rank. VTCSOM does not apply a timetable for promotion in the instructional categories at VTCSOM.

VII. Curriculum Vitae and Portfolio Requirements

To receive consideration for promotion, candidates must submit an updated curriculum vitae (CV) in the VTCSOM format. The CV must reflect the most recent work of the candidate, as evidenced by entries that are current as of the date the CV is submitted to the APT Committee. A given CV that is obviously out of date (e.g., most recent activities are older than 6 months) shall not receive consideration by the APT Committee.

Candidates must also submit an academic portfolio. It is important that the portfolio present as complete a picture as possible for the candidate. Guidelines for the content of portfolios are maintained on the web site of the VTCSOM Office of Faculty Affairs. Suggested items for inclusion in the portfolio appear below, but are subject to final review at the time of portfolio submission so that university requirements are met:

1. A cover letter from the candidate requesting the promotion and stating the desired track and rank.
2. Simple biographical information;
3. Initial appointment letter;
4. Most recent re-appointment letter;
5. Documents regarding *Teaching* including: summary evaluations; peer evaluations; reports from heads, directors or coordinators of blocks, rotations, clinics; evidence of continuing education and/or skills development; awards; and other documents. These documents

should be limited to those occurring since the initial appointment (in the case of assistant professors), since appointment to VTCSOM if the candidate moved from another academic institution (in the case of both assistant and associate professors), or since the last promotion (in the case of associate professors);

6. Documents regarding *Clinical Care* (if a clinician) including: clinical assignments; clinical teaching assignments such as ward or precepting activities; quality improvement activities; recertification (if relevant); active licensure and staff privileges; “scorecard” (if relevant); awards; and other documents. These documents should be limited to those occurring since the initial appointment (in the case of assistant professors), since appointment to VTCSOM if the candidate moved from another academic institution (in the case of both assistant and associate professors), or since the last promotion (in the case of associate professors);
7. Documents regarding *Scholarly Activity/Research* including: publications; presentations; grant submissions and/or awards; web-based scholarly activity (with URL); curricular innovations; videos; audiotapes; lay writing including, if relevant, social media (if medically or scientifically oriented); awards; and other documents. These documents should be limited to those occurring since the initial appointment (in the case of assistant professors), since appointment to VTCSOM if the candidate moved from another academic institution (in the case of both assistant and associate professors), or since the last promotion (in the case of associate professors);
8. Documents regarding *Service* including: VTCSOM committees served, including positions of leadership; School, hospital, local groups, committees or projects if involving medical issues; involvement in community, regional or local action groups if involving medical issues; service on Boards, study groups, task forces, or other regional or national organizations; awards; and other documents. These documents should be limited to those occurring since the initial appointment (in the case of assistant professors), since appointment to VTCSOM if the candidate moved from another academic institution (in the case of both assistant and associate professors), or since the last promotion (in the case of associate professors);
9. Letters of support: (these will be included in the portfolio by a representative of the department as letters are not reviewed by the candidate);
10. Letter from department Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Tenure (APRT) committee including any interval comments (e.g., comments from second (2nd) and fourth (4th) year review if currently assistant professor on either the tenure or tenure to title track). The APRT committee letter must provide a recommendation concerning the promotion. These comments will be included in the portfolio by a representative of the APRT committee as letters are not reviewed by the candidate;
11. Letter from the Chair of the Department. This will be included in the portfolio by a representative of the APRT committee as letters are not reviewed by the candidate. The chair letter must provide a recommendation concerning the promotion and also comment upon the candidate’s integrity, professional conduct and ethics;
12. Other relevant materials as deemed appropriate by either the candidate or the Department APRT committee or the Chair of the Department.

VIII. Timeline and Steps of the Promotion Process

The university promotion process takes approximately 17 months. The Office of the Provost publishes a timeline for all promotions each year, and this timeline will be strictly followed. The timeline is routinely sent to all department chairs and other personnel, and is also posted on the web site for the VTCSOM Office of Faculty Affairs. Faculty candidates and the chairs of departmental APRT Committees must familiarize themselves with these activities as well as the official published promotion timeline furnished by the Provost.

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors makes all promotion decisions at its June meeting each year.

IX. Appeal Process

The appeal of any promotion related decision by the VTCSOM APT Committee proceeds to the level of the Dean. The Dean's decision may endorse the judgments of all or most of the previous steps, or may contravene the decision of the VTCSOM APT committee. Appeal procedures beyond the level of the Dean are specified in the university faculty handbook.

X. Time in Rank

In the tenure track, promotion from assistant to associate professor is expected within seven years, unless there are extenuating circumstances. There is no timetable for promotion from associate to full professor in the tenure track.

Only two ranks in the tenure to title track have a time limit. Promotion from assistant professor to associate professor in the tenure to title track is expected to be accomplished within seven (7) years from initial appointment to VTCSOM (in some circumstances, it may be eight (8) years). The expected time in rank for associate professor to professor in the tenure to title track is ten (10) years following promotion to associate professor at VTCSOM or from initial appointment as associate professor at VTCSOM

No time in rank is expected or assigned before promotion in the non-tenure track category or in the instructional faculty categories.

XI. Credit for Time Served, Tenure and Tenure to Title Tracks

A faculty member transferring to VTCSOM from another educational institution may wish to shorten the time in rank at VTCSOM before consideration for promotion and tenure or tenure to title. The faculty member can petition for consideration of time served at the previous educational institution. For the tenure track, university guidelines in this regard must be strictly followed.

The faculty member to be appointed at the assistant professor rank in the tenure to title track may petition for up to three (3) years of time in service at the time of initial appointment. Consideration for promotion to associate professor would then occur within the subsequent four (4) years following appointment to VTCSOM.

The faculty member to be appointed at the associate professor rank in the tenure to title track may petition for up to five (5) years of time in service at the time of initial appointment. Consideration for promotion to professor would then occur within the subsequent five (5) years following appointment to VTCSOM.

The petition for time served in the tenure to title track would be included in the appointment proposal developed by the faculty member and the Chair. This petition would go to the Dean. The Dean is empowered to determine time in service without consultation of the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee though the Dean should inform the APT committee of his/her decision.

XII. Time Deferred

A faculty member may request a period of time to be deferred from his/her time in rank. Typical reasons for time deferred include childbearing and/or childrearing; care for an ill family member (e.g., under Family Medical Leave Act); recovery from an illness (of at least six (6) months); military service (e.g., "called up" for prolonged service, not relevant to weekend duty or summer exercises); enrollment in or participation in advanced learning opportunities, including additional advanced degrees; other relevant professional, personal, or family reasons as specified by the university. Time deferred is considered independent of considerations of part-time professional activity or a leave-of-absence, both of which are considered in separate sections.

Time deferred can be requested for periods of six (6) months to one (1) year. The request can be made coincident with the event (illness of self or family member) or in anticipation (childbearing or childrearing). The time deferred would be added to the time in rank from the appointment date (e.g., for an assistant professor, the time in rank could be extended from seven (7) years to eight (8) years). Time deferred may be requested more than once during the time in rank, but each request should be limited to a maximum of one (1) year.

A request for time deferred should be made by the faculty member to his/her Chair. If approved, the request is forwarded to the Dean who is empowered to approve the request and set the length of time deferred (one year except in special circumstances). The Dean should inform the APT committee of his/her action. Deferrals may also require the endorsement of the university.

XIII. Leave of Absence

Leave of absence is typically taken for employment reasons as an appointment to VTCSOM is

considered full-time, regardless of the extent or type of employment. Nonetheless, leave of absence is typically taken because a faculty member expects to be unable to fulfill employment requirements; a similar effect on time for teaching or other academic activity is a reasonable effect as well. Leave of absence of relatively short duration is unlikely to affect issues related to either promotion and tenure to title or maintenance of appointment. In promotion and tenure to title consideration, if the faculty member is on the tenure to title track, a leave of absence may decrease the amount of time available to attain promotion unless a deferral is formally requested. In maintenance of appointment, a leave of absence may result in a shortened faculty appointment cycle, potentially leaving the faculty member with reduced time to demonstrate either teaching activity or effort to improve teaching.

If an employment leave of absence is expected to last six (6) or more months, the faculty member can petition the department Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Tenure (APRT) committee. The petition can request that the time available to complete the expectations involved (i.e., promotion/tenure to title and/or maintenance of appointment) be extended in length consistent with the leave of absence. The decision of the department APRT committee should be forwarded to the VTCSOM Appointment, Promotion and Tenure (APT) committee for ratification. Any extension would be entered into the faculty file for record keeping.