

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION – ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
POLICY NUMBER – ACAF 1.18
POLICY TITLE – CHANGE IN STATUS FOR TENURE-TRACK AND NON-TENURE TRACK
PROFESSIONAL FACULTY
SCOPE OF POLICY – USC UPSTATE
DATE OF REVISION – February 23, 2026
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER - PROVOST
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

PURPOSE

The University of South Carolina Upstate affirms its commitment to transparent and equitable faculty appointment practices. This policy establishes the procedures and administrative parameters for changing the status of full-time faculty between tenure-track and professional-track ranks, as well as for promotion within the professional ranks. It clarifies the conditions under which such changes may occur, the required approvals, and the role of unit-level recommendations. This policy ensures consistency in faculty status transitions while supporting institutional standards for performance, rank, and appointment integrity.

DEFINITIONS

Administrative Decision: A change in faculty appointment status made by university leadership that does not require a formal search process.

Approval Vote: A formal vote by departmental faculty to recommend a change in status or promotion for a faculty member.

Contingency: A condition outlined in an official offer letter that must be satisfied before a tenure-track appointment becomes effective (e.g., completion of a terminal degree).

Non-Tenure Track Faculty: Full-time faculty members who hold positions that are not eligible for tenure, including professional-track roles.

Promotion: Advancement in faculty rank based on performance, time in service, and fulfillment of unit and university criteria.

Proper Search: A recruitment process that meets university standards for faculty hiring, including public posting, candidate evaluation, and documentation.

Tenure Track Faculty: Full-time faculty members who hold positions that may lead to tenure, subject to university policies and procedures.

Unit Criteria: Standards established by an academic department or unit that guide decisions on faculty appointments, promotions, and changes in status.

POLICY STATEMENT

This document outlines the University of South Carolina Upstate policy for changes in appointment status between tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty positions. It also establishes the criteria and process for promotion within non-tenure-track professional faculty ranks. This policy is intended to guide academic units in making consistent and transparent decisions regarding faculty status changes and promotions, in alignment with institutional standards and expectations.

Scope of Appointment Changes

- A tenure-track faculty member may request a change to a non-tenure-track professional rank position. This change is considered an administrative action and does not require a new search, provided a proper search was conducted initially.
- A non-tenure-track faculty member who wishes to be considered for a tenure-track position must apply for the vacancy and participate in the full, competitive search process in accordance with university hiring policies and procedures. **Exception:** If an official offer letter issued pursuant to a proper search specifies that a tenure-track appointment is contingent upon the satisfaction of specific requirements (e.g., documented completion of a terminal degree), a non-tenure-track faculty member who was initially appointed through that search may be eligible for conversion to a tenure-track position upon fulfillment of the stated contingencies, without the need for a new search process.
- Non-tenure-track professional faculty may apply for promotion to an advanced rank within their position after meeting university and unit-specific time and performance expectations.

Note: Academic units should consult with the Office of International Support for Faculty & Staff regarding any immigration implications for international faculty. Contact the Academic Affairs Human Resources Coordinator to initiate consultation.

PROCEDURES

A. Changing from Tenure-Track to Professional-Track Faculty

1. The unit's tenure-track and tenured faculty will vote, providing a recommendation for or against the change of status as well as to the rank based on the unit's professional-track unit criteria.
2. The dean will submit a written request to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs along with the candidate's curriculum vita.
3. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs may approve, disapprove, or defer a decision on the change of appointment status.

4. If approved, the change in appointment takes effect at the beginning of the following semester after written approval by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (January 1 or August 16).

B. Changing from Professional-Track to Tenure-Track Faculty

1. Consideration for an Open Tenure-Track Position
 - a. The non-tenure-track faculty member must apply for any available tenure-track vacancy.
 - b. The faculty member must participate in the full, competitive search process in accordance with university hiring policies and procedures.
 - c. Appointment to a tenure-track position is contingent upon successful completion of all steps in the formal search, evaluation, and selection process.
2. Transfer to Tenure Track after Satisfying Contingency
 - a. The change in appointment follows when the faculty member provides evidence to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs that the contingency has been met and provided the faculty member's performance has been satisfactory. The change in the appointment must be approved by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.
 - b. The change in appointment takes effect on either January 1 or August 16, whichever date is first following the date the contingency was satisfied.

C. Changing Titles within Professional-Track at the Same Rank

1. The unit's tenure-track and tenured faculty will vote, providing a recommendation for or against the change of status based on the unit's professional-track unit criteria.
2. The dean will submit a written request to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs along with the candidate's curriculum vita.
3. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs may approve, disapprove, or defer a decision on the change of appointment status.
4. If approved, the change in appointment takes effect at the beginning of the following semester after written approval by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (January 1 or August 16).

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE, AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[ACAF 1.00: Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-track, and Professional-track faculty](#)

[ACAF 1.06: Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions](#)

[Faculty Manual Appendix VII: Guidelines for File Preparation for Other Reviews](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

- February 23, 2026 - Revised policy consistent with USC Upstate Faculty Manual and added section on changing titles within professional-track at the same rank