

**NUMBER:** 1411

**TITLE:** Tenure

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**SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE:** September 2028

I. Purpose of Tenure

The main purposes of tenure are to protect academic freedom and to enable the University to attract and retain a permanent faculty of distinction in order to accomplish its mission. For these reasons, tenure is usually awarded only after a suitable probationary period, and the decision to award tenure is based both on the merit of the individual faculty member and on the long-term needs and mission of the department, the college, and the University.

II. Eligibility for Tenure

A. Only faculty members who hold the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor are eligible to be considered for tenure. Assistant professors will be awarded tenure only if they are simultaneously being promoted to the rank of associate professor.

B. Faculty members may be considered for tenure only once.

C. Under certain circumstances administrative faculty holding rank in a department at the assistant professor (if promotion to the rank of associate professor is being simultaneously considered), associate professor, or full professor level may be considered for tenure, as specified by the Board of Visitors policy concerning administrative faculty.

D. Since tenure is granted as a faculty member in an academic department or program, the award of tenure does not imply continuance in any full-time or part-time administrative position, nor does it imply continuance of any specific work assignment within or outside the department in which tenure is granted.

### III. Probationary Period

A. The probationary period begins with the initial full-time, tenure-track appointment at Old Dominion University at the rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor; only time spent in a tenure-track position at one of these ranks is counted as part of the probationary period.

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2. The request must be the result of the occurrence of a serious event. A “serious event” is defined as a life-altering situation which requires the faculty member to devote a significant fraction of each day to alleviate the impact of the event for a period greater than six weeks and less than one year. These events may include the birth of a child, adoption of a child under the age of six years, serious personal illness or care of an immediate family member, such as a parent, stepparent, child, spouse, or domestic partner.
  3. The faculty member shall provide documentation to justify the time requested and the seriousness of the event.
  4. The request shall be made no later than one year from the first day of the serious event.
  5. The faculty member must have been adequately performing the duties assigned prior to the first day of the serious event.
  6. Faculty who are awarded this exclusion shall have no requirements or expectations beyond those of any probationary faculty member.
  7. Work accomplished during the excluded period may be cited in the tenure case.
  8. Requests for exclusion may be made at any time during each academic year. No request shall be made after the application for tenure has been submitted.
  9. Decisions will be made within 60 days of the receipt of the faculty member’s request by the department chair.
  10. The decision of the provost and vice president for academic affairs is final.
- D. The maximum total period for full-time probationary appointments (excluding periods not counted, see section III.B.) is six years, unless an approved extension is granted (see section III.C.). If the tenure decision is negative, a one-year terminal appointment is offered.
- E. The length of the probationary period may be reduced in any of the following instances:
1. A faculty member initially appointed to the rank of full professor may be considered for tenure in the second year of service and would be notified of a tenure decision according to the schedule in the Teaching and Research Faculty Handbook.





- a. A curriculum vita will be required of each external reviewer. Each reviewer will be asked to describe any personal or professional relationship with the candidate. It is the responsibility of the chair to include a curriculum vitae of each reviewer. For tenure of department chairs, the responsibility belongs to the dean.
  - b. External reviewers will be asked to evaluate all submitted material mailed to them based on the department's approved criteria for the evaluation of scholarly activity and research. In the case of the arts, reviewers may be asked to consider works of art or performances. External reviewers will be asked to evaluate: a) the quality of the scholarship or creative work under review; and b) the scholarly reputation (regional, national, international) of the candidate.
  - c. All candidates for promotion and tenure will be required to have their scholarship evaluated by no fewer than four external reviewers. If fewer than four reviews are received, the chair will choose additional reviewers alternately from the lists of the department promotion and tenure committee and of the candidates.
3. The determined long-term needs of the department, college, and University, including at least the following:
    - a. The long-term enrollment of the department.
    - b. The need for an additional specialist in the faculty member's area of specialization as a permanent member of the department in terms of the mission of the department, the college, and the University.
    - c. The tenure structure of the department. (Although no maximum percentage of faculty members on tenure is established, all committees and administrators considering tenure must take into account the need for flexibility in course offerings and the desirability of a tenure structure that will allow openings for new tenured faculty members in the ensuing decades so that new areas of specialization and new needs can be met. The position of other nontenured faculty members in the department, anticipated retirements, or other known departures, and projected new programs or changes in directions must be considered.)
  4. No person can be awarded tenure unless convincing evidence is provided of effective teaching.
  5. No faculty member can be awarded tenure unless convincing evidence is provided of successful performance in scholarly activity and research, as judged by the department's approved criteria for the evaluation of scholarly activity and research. It is the faculty member's responsibility to include these criteria in the research portfolio submitted to external reviewers and in the



reviewers must be completed before the end of the semester prior to the submission





recommendation letters by the committee or individual (e.g. dean) who first see this new material.

- E. The committee or group of tenured faculty makes its recommendations to the chair (or replacement, see section V.B.) together with reasons for the recommendation (including a minority statement in the case of a non-unanimous vote). All committee members shall vote yes or no through a secret ballot, after participating (either in person or remotely) in the deliberation of the committee. Proxy votes or votes submitted by non-secure means (e.g., email or communication accessible to a third party) are not permitted. The chair of the committee shall record the names of all members participating in the discussion and voting in the recommendation letter, as well as the total number of votes in favor and against. Only those faculty present as the candidate is being interviewed during the deliberations can participate in drafting or approving the letter. In instances of a non-unanimous vote, the minority opinion must be included in the committee recommendation and the minority must be given the option to write a minority opinion. A copy of the recommendation letter will be sent to the faculty member by the chair of the committee. Considering this recommendation, the department chair (or replacement, unless the dean is acting in the chair's stead, see section V.B.) makes an additional evaluation and recommendation concerning tenure. A copy of that review and recommendation letter will be sent to the faculty member and the dean by the chair of the department.
  
- F. If either the tenured faculty (or their committee), or the chair (or replacement, see section V.B.), or both recommend tenure, the credentials of the faculty member together with the recommendations of the tenured faculty (or their committee) and the chair

must be given the option to write the minority opinion. The dean then makes a decision concerning tenure and informs the faculty member.

If either the decision of the college committee or that of the dean is positive, the faculty member's case is considered in accordance with the procedures in the following paragraphs. If both decisions are negative, the faculty member may request, within two weeks, a further review by the provost and vice president for academic affairs, who makes a final determination concerning further consideration of tenure.

- H. The dean of the college examines the facts and all previous recommendations and makes a recommendation concerning tenure, which is forwarded to the provost and vice president for academic affairs, with a copy to the faculty member.
- I. The University Promotion and Tenure Committee, consisting of one tenured full professor from each of the major degree-granting academic colleges, examines the facts and all previous recommendations and documentation and makes a recommendation (with reasons) concerning tenure, which is forwarded to the provost and vice president for academic affairs. All eligible committee members shall vote yes or no through a secret ballot, after participating (either in person or remotely) in the deliberation of the committee. Proxy votes or votes submitted by non-secure means (e.g., email or communication accessible to a third party) are not permitted. Members who are eligible to vote on a specific candidate's tenure application are defined in section V.D.5. In instances of a non-unanimous vote of all eligible voting members, the minority opinion must be included in the committee recommendation and the minority must be given the option to write the minority opinion. The Office of the Provost will provide a copy of the recommendation letter to the dean of the college, the department chair and the faculty member.
- J. The provost and vice president for academic affairs, after examining all submitted documents and consulting with appropriate staff members, makes a determination concerning tenure for the faculty member. If the recommendations from all committees and administrators previously acting on the case have not all been the same, or if the provost and vice president for academic affairs disagrees with the recommendations that have been the same, then the provost and vice president for academic affairs shall consult with the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and with the chair (if tenured) and dean concerned.
- K. If the determination of the provost and vice president for academic affairs is in favor of tenure, the provost and vice president for academic affairs forwards the faculty member's name to the president for presentation to the Board of Visitors as a candidate for tenure. The Board of Visitors will act on the case according to the schedule in the Teaching and Research Faculty Handbook of the year in which it is being taken up. Upon approval of the Board of Visitors, the faculty member is offered a tenure contract for the coming year.
- L. If the determination of the provost and vice president for academic affairs is against tenure, the faculty member is notified according to the schedule in the Teaching and

Research Faculty Handbook that a terminal contract will be offered for the ensuing year.

- M. The faculty member may request, within two weeks, that the president review a negative decision of the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The president should make a decision on the review within one month. If the president upholds the

C. If a faculty member applies for tenure in or before their third year of probationary service at Old Dominion University, the pre-tenure review will not be conducted.

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<sup>1</sup>In case of a national, state or local emergency that prevents or seriously hinders the normal activities of faculty members for a period of several months, the University may provide the option for all tenure-track faculty members to extend their tenure clock by a specified period of time equivalent to that lost to the emergency, irrespective of any other exclusion granted to a faculty member.

<sup>2</sup>See the Schedules for Faculty Personnel Actions in the appendix for specific dates and actions.

<sup>3</sup>The members of the Faculty Senate are elected in general in the Spring by the Faculty. The Faculty Senate is composed of 10 members, 4 from the College of Arts and Sciences, 4 from the College of Business Administration, and 2 from the College of Education. The members of the Faculty Senate are elected in general in the Spring by the Faculty. The Faculty Senate is composed of 10 members, 4 from the College of Arts and Sciences, 4 from the College of Business Administration, and 2 from the College of Education.