Appointment, Retention, and Promotion and Faculty Titles
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General Considerations: Purpose

This document sets forth principles, procedures, and criteria for appointment, promotion, and retention pertaining to faculty activities at the University. The designation "faculty" includes all employees of AUA who hold faculty contracts and bear one of the faculty titles listed on pages 3-4 of this policy.

Obligations of the University to its faculty members and of the faculty to the University

The obligations of the University to its faculty members are:

1. To protect the right of each faculty member to academic freedom; that is, the right to pursue knowledge, to write, and to speak freely as responsible citizens without institutionally imposed restrictions. A faculty member must be judged as a scholar and a teacher on the basis of legitimate intellectual and professional criteria and not on their political views, religious beliefs, or other matters of personal preference.
2. To provide an intellectual environment for scholarly growth and achievement.
3. To provide opportunities for academic advancement according to prescribed criteria and procedures.

The obligations of faculty members of the University are:

1. To carry out duly assigned academic duties.
2. To develop and improve their professional abilities and achievements in teaching, research, creative scholarship, service, and other aspects of their academic responsibilities.
3. To participate in advisory or committee assignments necessary to the development of academic programs, in advising students, and in the governance of the University, and to share in broader responsibilities to the University, the local community, and Armenia at large.
4. To teach with intellectual and ethical integrity (See AUA Faculty Code of Conduct).

Criteria for Appointment and Promotion

1. Excellence in teaching, whether in the lecture hall, in a seminar, in a laboratory, or in the field is essential. Excellence in teaching connotes an objective, current, accurate, and balanced command of the field being taught, effectiveness in communicating its essential elements, and willingness to interact and exchange views with students at the highest levels of intellectual integrity. Promotion committees may seek and evaluate the advice of students, alumni, and peers on the teaching ability of specific faculty members.
2. Creative scholarship is the substantive contribution of new knowledge or significant new applications of knowledge: (1) scholarship of discovery, (2) scholarship of integration, (3) scholarship of application, and (4) scholarship of teaching. This definition aims to value a broad spectrum of scholarship that allows AUA to tailor recognition of faculty activities and efforts to match the unique qualities and strengths of the university and each academic program. Scholarship of discovery means the traditional concept of scholarship vetted in peer-reviewed journals and monographs. Scholarship of integration values cross-disciplinary work that produces or presents new, creative and innovative perspectives, including textbooks and reference works. Scholarship of application values the application of theory to practice in a specific or novel context that results in a new, creative, and innovative understanding of knowledge. Scholarship of teaching values creative and innovative pedagogical approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, including curriculum design or other activities beyond routine teaching responsibilities.
3. University and Community Service: (1) active and effective participation in various administrative, advisory, and other responsibilities in the university and (2) excellence in discharging professional service responsibilities in the community, to professional and other organizations, to the international community, and as reflected in the faculty member's national and international reputation as a professional and scholar.

The Faculty Senate will help develop guidelines in collaboration with the AUA administration for such matters as peer review of faculty on these criteria, including what evidence may be considered and how it may be weighed with due consideration to consistency and fairness across the academic programs. See Faculty Evaluation Policy.

Faculty Recruitment (Note: These provisions do not apply to Visiting Faculty.)

The University is committed to conducting open and thorough searches to identify the best candidate for each faculty position. An effective search is important for several reasons. First, it casts the net as widely as possible to identify the best candidate for a position. Second, it ensures that all persons, regardless of gender, race, age, or other factors have equal opportunity to be considered fairly. A thorough search includes broad advertisement of the position by (1) advertisements in academic (including domain-specific) and professional journals, (2) web postings, and (3) personal networks.

The Dean of the respective college shall form the Search Committee and appoint its Chair in consultation with the Provost. The committee shall include members of the relevant academic program, including full-time faculty and program chairs, to ensure appropriate academic representation and informed evaluation of candidates. No faculty search may begin without the approval of the Provost and the concurrence of the President. The Search Committee is responsible for conducting the search, while the Human Resources Department coordinates the recruitment process and supports compliance with applicable University procedures.

The Search Committee Chair will provide evidence to the Dean of an open and thorough search for each faculty appointment or explanation of the circumstances that forced an abbreviated process.

After review by the Dean, faculty appointments are made by the Provost, subject to the approval of the President, or by the President in the absence or recusal of the Provost.

Titles for Faculty

As described below, faculty of the University will be appointed utilizing a rank and descriptor appropriate to their degree credentials, disciplinary training and experience, and their potential level of professional commitment to the University.

Professor

Designates faculty who:

1. Have an extensive record of impactful research and publications, including contributions in reputable journals in the applicant's field in the past three years and numerous presentations at national and international conferences. In applicable disciplines, citations and impact factor of publications will be considered. Publications credited toward the candidate's most recent promotion are ineligible for consideration in the subsequent promotion from Associate Professor to Professor.
2. Demonstrate evidence of potential to secure external research funding or grants, if appropriate to the academic domain in question.
3. Demonstrate effective mentorship of students, with a record of guiding graduate students or advanced undergraduates to successful completion of their research projects.
4. Have had substantial leadership in service roles at the University, such as chairing academic committees, leading major institutional initiatives, organizing conferences, etc.
5. Demonstrate intellectual influence, evidenced by invited talks/addresses, editorial board memberships, awards, or fellowships.
6. Hold a Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree for their field of study.
7. Have a minimum of 12 years' experience in academia with at least 6 years at the rank of Associate Professor or higher. Exceptions can be made for highly qualified candidates at the discretion of the Provost, subject to the approval of the President, or of the President in the absence or recusal of the Provost.
8. Demonstrate sustained excellence in teaching, evidenced by exemplary student evaluations, peer observations, and contributions to pedagogy (innovative teaching, curriculum design, course development, program evaluation, etc.) Student evaluations must include, at minimum, examples from the past two years. All student evaluations must come from a period *after* the candidate's last promotion.
9. Have active engagement with academic professional service outside the university, with evidence of leadership in outreach activities/initiatives, consulting, or applied research that addresses societal needs.
10. Possess scholarly status at the international level, or comparable achievements, as customary in their field, at this rank, commensurate with this position in academia in the United States (e.g., significant citation impact or scholarly influence; service as PI or Co-PI on internationally competitive grants; visiting scholar positions or residencies; authorship of books with major academic presses; service on editorial boards of international journals; service or consultation for the benefit of the community or the nation; chairship or organization of international conferences; participation in multi-country research collaborations, receipt of internationally recognized scholarly awards or prizes, etc.)

Associate Professor

Designates faculty who:

1. Have a significant research portfolio with peer-reviewed publications in reputable journals in the candidate's field and conference presentations.
2. Show active participation in professional organizations, societies, and/or associations.
3. Demonstrate mentorship of students.
4. Demonstrate a consistently strong record of teaching, evidenced by innovative teaching practices and productions and curriculum development, student evaluations (including, at minimum, examples from the past two years), and peer observations. All student evaluations must come from a period *after* the candidate's last promotion.
5. Have a record of at least six years' experience in academia as an Assistant Professor or higher rank. Exceptions can be made for highly qualified candidates at the discretion of the Dean or the Provost.
6. Have a PhD or equivalent terminal degree.
7. Demonstrate interest in and capacity for professional service or community engagement.
8. Show evidence of substantial service to the institution, including participation on various committees and in program- and/or college-wide initiatives.
9. Possess scholarly status at the international level, or comparable achievements, as customary in their field, at this rank, in the United States. The emphasis here is on emerging international visibility, credible scholarly contributions, and a clear upward trajectory. (Examples include, but are not limited to: a solid, coherent record of peer-reviewed scholarship; presentations at international conferences; invitations to join panels, roundtables, or workshops; occasional reviewing for international journals or conferences; a book or book chapters with established academic presses; participation in international research teams or projects; applying for internationally competitive grants, etc.)

Assistant Professor

Designates faculty who:

1. Have presented research or other creative output at conferences.
2. Have a PhD. or equivalent terminal degree.
3. Demonstrate teaching potential, substantiated by evaluations from prior teaching roles or teaching assistantships.
4. Demonstrate commitment to professional service and participation in professional organizations in their field.
5. Show initial evidence of research capability through publications or work submitted for publication consideration in reputable journals in the candidate's field.
6. Submit a two-year research agenda and teaching development plan, outlining goals and aspirational contributions to the university.
7. Possess scholarly status or comparable achievements as customary in their field, at this rank, in the United States (e.g., one or two peer-reviewed publications; articles under review or in revision at reputable journals; paper or poster presentations at international conferences; national or international doctoral fellowships, research grants, or travel awards; a research agenda clearly aligned with debates or problems discussed internationally, etc.).

Senior Lecturer

Designates faculty engaged primarily in teaching (and teaching-related duties) and possessing exceptional qualifications or special skills and a demonstrated, ongoing commitment to the University, meriting a special designation above the "lecturer" rank. Appointment at the Senior Lecturer rank is for those who have a graduate degree (but not necessarily a doctorate) and at least seven years' teaching experience in graduate- and/or undergraduate-level courses.

Lecturer

Designates faculty engaged primarily in teaching (and teaching-related duties) and those who demonstrate commitment to the university. Appointment at the Lecturer rank is for those who have a graduate degree (but not necessarily a doctorate) and teaching experience in graduate- and/or undergraduate level courses.

Professor of the Practice

Designates distinguished practitioners who possess the expertise and achievements to provide professional instruction in a manner that advances the mission of the University in a significant or substantial way.

Adjunct

Designates those whose educational level and professional accomplishments qualify them for a ranked position on the faculty to teach or conduct research or work in an area of special expertise and who have a recurring appointment or sustained commitment to AUA, but whose primary commitment is not to AUA. The term can be used to modify the above *ranked* academic titles (for example, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Adjunct Associate Professor, Adjunct Lecturer, etc.).

Researcher

Designates those whose educational level and professional accomplishments qualify them for a ranked position on the faculty and whose primary professional engagement with the University is in research. The extent to which Researchers are required to teach is determined by the Dean on a case-by-case basis.

Research Fellow

Designates those whose educational level and professional accomplishments qualify them for the rank of Professor in the faculty, whose primary professional engagement with the University is in high-level research, and who have achieved international renown for their research achievements. The extent to which Research Fellows are required to teach is determined by the Dean on a case-by-case basis.

Visiting

Designates temporary faculty whose appointment is for one or two semesters only, and whose educational level and professional accomplishments would qualify them for a ranked position. The term can be used to modify the above *ranked* academic titles, as well as researcher and researcher fellow titles (for example, Visiting Assistant Professor, Visiting Associate Professor, Visiting Research Fellow, etc.).

Emeritus/Emerita Faculty

Conferred upon full-time faculty members following retirement from the University; these faculty must wait six months after their retirement date before receiving the title. Conferred by the Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the appropriate department, the Provost, and the President, the status is an honor that is given for exceptional contributions to the University's programs and to recognize scientific and academic excellence. Emeriti faculty may be offered full-time or part-time employment with the University for a specified term, subject to the approval of the AUA President.

Titles for Non-faculty Teaching Positions

Instructor and Senior Instructor

Designates a person appointed to teach in a non-degree program. May be an entry-level position. Appointment at the instructor rank is generally for those who have not yet completed their terminal degree. May be requested to engage in University, public, and/or professional, academic service. Appointment at the Senior Instructor rank is for those who have at least two years' teaching experience.

Initial Appointment to Faculty Positions

A recommendation for appointment of a new hire to the rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor is made by the Dean to the Provost. It is the responsibility of the Dean to inform candidates in writing when their applications have not been successful. After review by the Dean, all appointments are made by the Provost, subject to the approval of the President, or by the President in the absence or recusal of the Provost, to ensure that all procedures are followed and that all criteria are applied. Appointment is for one academic year; however, longer contracts may be issued by the Provost, subject to the approval of the President, or of the President in the absence or recusal of the Provost.

Reappointments

Faculty members who are eligible for reappointment shall demonstrate evidence of contributions to those enumerated in the criteria in the "Criteria for Appointment and Promotion" section of this policy. The University's faculty evaluation process, evidence of a solid, consistent teaching performance, research and/or other scholarly work, and service to the University community and to the community at large shall be considered. After evaluation and recommendation by the Dean, the reappointments are made by the Provost, subject to the approval of the President, or by the President in the absence or recusal of the Provost.

Promotion to Higher Faculty Rank

AUA does not currently have a tenure system. Yet, in order to recognize important academic and service accomplishments by its faculty, AUA has a clearly defined promotion process for advancement in the professorial ranks. This process is initiated by the faculty member, reviewed by the appropriately ranked faculty, College Dean, a confidential Ad Hoc Review Committee, and by the Provost, who will oversee the review process. The AUA President will make the final promotion determination. The material for the review will include documentation of the faculty member's accomplishments, including Curriculum Vitae and documentation of teaching (syllabi, teaching observations, student evaluations, statement of teaching philosophy), scholarly and administrative accomplishments, in addition to letters of reference from outside AUA, preferably from internationally recognized academic experts in the field. Specific procedures to enact this policy have been developed by the University administration and faculty; the current procedures are appended to this policy document as Appendix A and Appendix B (Promotion Procedures) and may be altered, as needed, upon consultation with and approval by the Academic Affairs Committee of the AUA Board of Trustee.

Related Documents

Appendix A: Promotion Procedures for Full-time Faculty_Updated as of 03.10.2026

Appendix B: Promotion Procedures for Adjunct Lecturers

Appendix C: Criteria and Rubrics for Promotion Evaluations

Faculty Recruitment Procedure

Guidelines on Teaching Assistants and Teaching Associates

Professor of the Practice Definition and Procedure