

Texas A&M AgriLife Research Procedures

12.99.99.A0.03 | Faculty Promotion

Revised: April 18, 2023

Next Scheduled Review: April 18, 2028

[Click Here to View Revision History](#)



PROCEDURE SUMMARY

This procedure sets minimum requirements, establishes the criteria for promotion for professorial faculty positions in Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research), and outlines the annual promotion cycle. Promotion documents are to be treated in a confidential manner within the requirements of current privacy laws/regulations and The Texas A&M University System (System) Regulation 61.01.02, *Public Information*.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.0 CRITERIA FOR FACULTY RANK

The following criteria should be considered in appointment to or promotion in faculty rank:

- 1.1 *Assistant Professor (including Research, Adjunct, and Visiting)*—Earned doctorate with the expectation of substantial research, publication, and mentoring within the context of one or more research programs (e.g., laboratory, bench science, social science, or other disciplinary setting) with postdoctoral fellows, junior research colleagues, or students at any level.
- 1.2 *Associate Professor (including Research, Adjunct, and Visiting)*—Earned doctorate and a record of substantial research, publication, and mentoring within the context of one or more research programs (e.g., laboratory, bench science, social science, or other disciplinary setting) with post doctoral fellows, junior research colleagues, or students at any level. Candidate should have an exemplary level of accomplishment as measured against contributions of others in the field; professional conduct conducive to a collegial work environment, and standards of professional integrity that will advance the interests of the agency; an area of specialization germane to the agency; and evidence indicating a commitment to maintaining the level of competence in research, publication and mentoring.
- 1.3 *Professor (including Research, Adjunct, and Visiting)*—Earned doctorate with a record of significant research publication and mentoring within the context of one or more research programs (e.g., laboratory, bench science, social science, or other disciplinary setting) with postdoctoral fellows, junior research colleagues, or students at any level. Continued accomplishment in research and scholarship; continuing accomplishment, and some measure of national recognition of research; and evidence of valuable professional service.
- 1.4 The term "substantial" regarding research and mentoring is measured in multiple ways:
 - Quantity (i.e., there should be evidence of a significant amount of research and/or mentoring); and
 - Quality (i.e., the research and/or mentoring done by the individual is effective and has significant impact on the students and colleagues being taught; research has a significant impact on society and benefit to science).
- 1.5 AgriLife Research faculty who are jointly employed with a university and who are eligible for tenure will follow that institution's guidelines regarding faculty promotion and tenure.

- 1.6 AgriLife Research faculty located on the Texas A&M University (Texas A&M) campus who do not hold a joint appointment with Texas A&M must hold the rank of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, Research Professor, or may be considered adjunct or visiting.

2.0 EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND BASIS OF DETERMINATION

On decisions regarding promotion in rank, the major emphasis should be on research-related criteria, and the performance of those responsibilities as outlined in the position description and plan of work. Additional supporting materials provided in the curriculum vitae such as public and institutional service, teaching, and other non-research activities will be included in the overall assessment.

The achievements, productivity, and effectiveness of a faculty member will be assessed from the information contained in the candidate's curriculum vitae and plan of work. The following major criteria should be included in the evaluation of the curriculum vitae and plan of work.

- A. Accomplishment of research project objectives from plan(s) of work.
- B. Publication of research in scholarly and professional refereed journals.
- C. Publication of research in practitioner journals targeted for industry and user groups.
- D. Receipt of awards for research excellence.
- E. Invited participation at professional and scientific meetings.
- F. Offices held or committee assignments in professional societies.
- G. Significant external research funding.
- H. Effective relationship with research-user groups.
- I. Evidence of a well-planned and developed program of research that has contributed to the advancement of knowledge or has produced a tangible benefit to society (e.g., superior crop variety, better breed of livestock, software utilization, patent applications, new technology, etc.).
- J. Other activities that have contributed to accomplishing AgriLife Research goals, such as improving the visibility of units and programs, participating in interdisciplinary research, or improving the effectiveness of the AgriLife Research unit.

3.0 REVIEW PROCESS FOR PROMOTION OF FACULTY IN PROFESSORIAL RANK

Promotion is a matter of central concern to individual faculty members and to the agency; therefore, the process must uphold high standards of fairness and review.

3.1 Review Process for Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor

Within five (5) years of appointment and prior to the sixth (6) year, an Assistant Professor/Research Assistant Professor must be considered for promotion to Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor. The results of this five-year review will be one of the following:

- A. Recommend promotion to Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor.
- B. Recommend that the faculty member be reevaluated the following year.
- C. Recommend non-reappointment with adequate time (up to one year) to relocate.

If the faculty member has not been promoted after the initial five-year review, he/she will undergo a final review after approximately six (6) years in rank, but before the seventh (7) year. The results of this final review will be one of the following:

- A. Recommend promotion to Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor.
- B. Recommend non-reappointment with adequate time (up to one year) to relocate.

3.2 Review Process for Promotion from Associate Processor to Professor

After six (6) years in rank, but prior to the seventh (7) year, each eligible Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor must be considered for promotion to Professor/Research Professor. The results of this six-year review will be one of the following:

- A. Recommend promotion to Professor/Research Professor.
- B. Recommend that the faculty member be reevaluated in two years.

If the faculty member has not been promoted after the six-year review, he/she will undergo another comprehensive review after eight (8) years, but before the ninth (9) year. The results of this review will be one of the following:

- A. Recommend promotion to Professor/Research Professor.
- B. Recommend that the faculty member remain at the Associate Professor/Research Associate Professor rank unless evidence is forthcoming in the future to warrant additional consideration.
- C. Recommend non-reappointment with adequate time (up to one year) to relocate.

4.0 TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE RESEARCH REVIEW OF CANDIDATES

4.1 General Processes

This document outlines processes for faculty promotion within Texas A&M AgriLife Research faculty (whether 06 Research appointments or joint 06/07 Research/Extension appointments). Specified in this document are processes for the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, administratively located (Workday supervisory organization/adloc) to AgriLife Research. The term 'supervisor' used in this document refers to the persons overseeing the faculty member, be it the department head, the center director, or the appropriate combination.

- 4.2 If a candidate has a teaching responsibility, appointment, or is teaching on an overload basis, the Department Head will evaluate the teaching performance as per their departmental guidelines and convey their assessment in the Department Head letter that goes to the Agency Associate Director(s).

4.3 Timelines

Evaluation of Texas A&M AgriLife Research faculty members follows similar promotion timelines as College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS) faculty.

4.4 Appendices

See <https://faculty.aglifesciences.tamu.edu/promotion-tenure/>

4.5 Position Description

The candidate's position description serves as the document of record (baseline) used by committee members, external reviewers, and supervisors to evaluate accomplishments and impacts of the candidate. Therefore, it is imperative that the faculty member's position description is current and accurately reflects the candidate's responsibilities and duties. This will allow a fair and equitable evaluation of the candidate's performance. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their position description in Workday matches the position description in the dossier. Candidates should discuss position description revisions with their supervisor prior to the supervisor or unit contact making the position restriction edits in Workday.

4.6 Mentoring Committee

The mentoring committee is a critical entity that contributes to the success of new faculty members. The supervisor(s) should provide guidance on suitable faculty mentors. Responsibilities of the mentoring committee include:

- A. Assisting the candidate in developing their dossier for their Mid-Term Review (described below) and for promotion.
- B. The mentoring committee assists the candidate in developing a list of potential external reviewers that may evaluate the faculty member during candidacy for promotion.
- C. The chair of the mentoring committee should be a Research faculty member with a rank higher than the mentee. Committee members can be from other Department/Center/Unit faculty members as deemed appropriate.
- D. Documentation of the status of the faculty member's performance recommendations are presented to the supervisor(s) annually, until the faculty member successfully moves to the rank of associate professor.

5.0 DEVELOPING THE DOSSIER AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR PROMOTION

Potential candidates should refer to their Agency's career ladder documents regarding timelines for their Midterm Review and promotion considerations, dates when relevant materials are due, metrics to consider when assessing readiness to seek promotion, and items to include when developing their dossier.

5.1 Candidate's Dossier (See Appendices (Section 4.4))

The candidate will provide the following to their supervisor(s):

- Candidate 3-page Summary Statement

5.2 Overview: The summary should reflect the philosophy of the candidate and describe how the candidate has translated this into impacts in their field of discipline and to local, state, national, and international stakeholders. It should show disciplinary leadership at the career stage of the candidate (see Appendix II for more details).

5.3 Candidate Statement - A statement on research and scholarly contributions, academic teaching, and student mentoring (if applicable), and service/outreach activities as defined in their position description will be provided by the candidate. This will be the first document in the dossier. The document may be up to 3 single-sided pages in length, 11 pt. (allowed minimum), Arial or Times New Roman fonts, single spaced, with one-inch margins.

5.4 Joint Research/Extension Appointment Candidate Statement – A statement should follow the format of the majority ad loc. appointment (Research or Extension) with the addition of a separate section (within the 3-pages) added to the summary of a faculty member from the minority ad loc. (Research or Extension) appointment.

5.5 Candidates' CV should include (see Appendices (section 4.4)):

- Identifiers to include education background, years of service, years of service in current rank, department, unit, center, and appointment specifics.
- The candidate's Extension accomplishments section for Extension ad loc. Faculty and Research accomplishments section for Research ad loc. faculty.
- Additional categories in which the candidate has demonstrated contributions that align with their position description.

- Activities within each category are to be listed from most recent to older.
- When serving as a co-PI on a grant, the candidate is encouraged to provide 1-2 sentences under the grant information describing the unique role of the candidate to the project.
- The total value of the support received, and the dollars directed by the candidate are to be included in the AgriLife Research and Extension Summary Chart for Grants and Other Funding (Appendix III) which:
 - Should outline the candidate's activities in obtaining support for programming.
 - Should include internal and external grants, contracts, commodity support, gifts and user fees from programming efforts and services offered. May include in-kind contributions.

5.6 Covid-19 Impact Statement (optional)

- A candidate may choose whether or not to include the optional COVID-19 impact statement in their dossier submitted to external reviewers and included in Interfolio in the Other Materials and Documentation section. This would be a written statement describing how the pandemic impacted their position description and their program activities in each area of responsibility.
- Although the COVID-19 impact statements should focus on the professional impacts of the pandemic, it is important to understand that any of these situations might have been exacerbated by personal circumstances, such as increased caregiving responsibilities of children or elderly dependents, or medical conditions impacted by or related to COVID-19.
- Impact statements are intended to provide contextual information so that reviewers can evaluate a candidate's work in the context of the pandemic.
- A COVID-19 impact statement is a short narrative statement that a faculty member writes to provide contextual information for understanding how the pandemic has impacted their professional workload and responsibilities. The statements can be included for midterm review and promotion review. It may include:
 - A description of a faculty member's normal workload and planned activities.
 - A description of any disruptions to the normal workload and planned activities due to the pandemic.
 - A description of any new/unexpected tasks or responsibilities in response to the crisis.

6.0 EXTERNAL REVIEW LETTERS

6.1 At least four (no more than seven) external reviewers will be asked to evaluate the candidate's productivity as provided in the dossier and assess their quality of work and contribution/impact to their field. The candidate should have a potential list of "arms-length" external reviewers from their mentoring committee discussions. In addition, the candidate may provide input regarding the selection of external reviewers by submitting an AgriLife Research-Extension Candidate Suggested Reviewer Checklist form reviewer letters are selected from the candidate's list and half are selected from the supervisor's list (Appendix V).

6.2 External Letters

- "Arm's Length" external letters refer to letters from peers with minimal direct interaction with the candidate, including those who are not: coauthor or co-PI on a publication or grant (last 5 years); not a previous advisor, mentor, committee member or mentee.

6.3 Source of Letters – Letters may be from the following sources:

- Leading Land Grant institutions, and/or other institutions with outstanding leaders in the candidate's

- field of expertise.
 - Government scientists and specialists.
 - University letters should be from Professors; Associate Professors may serve as reviewers for candidates seeking promotion from the rank of Assistant Professor to Associate Professor.
 - For candidates with joint appointments, letters should be from Research faculty and Extension faculty and/or faculty that appreciate the contributions of research and Extension to overall success.
- 6.4 Letters cannot be from the candidate's "do not contact" list.
- 6.5 Include in the promotion packet a list of all external reviewers contacted regardless of whether they responded with a letter. For external letters, a reviewer biography that includes justification for their appropriateness (recognized expert, etc.) is included in the packet.
- In some fields, it may be difficult to find reviewers who have not collaborated with the candidate (e.g., being part of a large research consortium or a very narrowly focused area). In such a case, the supervisor(s) must obtain approval from the appropriate Associate Director to include letters from these reviewers. These letters are to be submitted to the AgriLife Research Peer Review Committee and/or AgriLife Extension Peer Review Committee as appropriate for review.
- 6.6 All External Review Letters requested and received must be submitted in the candidate's packet.
- 6.7 Other Letters
- Unsolicited letters from students and stakeholders may be included at the end of the promotion packet, separate from the External Reviewer Letters, when forwarding to the AgriLife Research Peer Review Committee.
 - These testimonials are not considered peer External Review letters and may not be read by the Peer Review Committee.

7.0 EVALUATION PROCESS

7.1 AgriLife Peer Review Committee

- An AgriLife-wide Research committee comprised of a minimum of 10 members plus a non-voting Chair, all of whom are majority ad-locked to AgriLife Research, will evaluate candidates with a research appointment. Members must be at the rank of Professor. Each serves a two-year commitment.
- The committee will consist of faculty with diverse research backgrounds, and there will be no more than two people from a specific department or unit on the committee at a time. Faculty with majority AgriLife Research joint appointments will be represented on the committee, as possible.
- After the 2023 promotion process, each appointed committee member will serve on the committee for two years. During 2023, seven faculty members of the committee will continue to serve for two additional years, and the other seven faculty members will serve for one additional year.
- The AgriLife Research Peer Review Committee will be responsible for reviewing the full packet of each candidate and providing recommendations to the supervisor(s) whether the candidate should be promoted to the next higher rank.
- The committee will work together to evaluate the candidate in Scholarly Contribution/Research, Academic Teaching/Student Mentoring (as applicable), Extension (as applicable) and Service/Outreach. The committee will prepare a report outlining their overall summary of the candidate's performance and provide a specific evaluation for each of their responsibilities as defined by their position description.

- Each committee member will provide the Chair their recommendation (yes, no, recused, or abstain). All members will vote despite department/unit affiliation.
- The committee chair will provide the committee's vote and a written report to the supervisor(s). The committee's vote and written report will remain with the candidate's packet and evaluation material throughout the process.

7.2 Joint Appointments

- Both the AgriLife Research Peer Review Committee and the AgriLife Extension Peer Review Committee will evaluate candidates with joint appointments independently. The committee representing the majority ad loc. appointment is responsible for writing the report. The committee representing the minority appointment will prepare an advisory report to be included in the final Peer Review Committee report. This report is submitted to the appropriate supervisors.

8.0 DEPARTMENT HEAD/CENTER DIRECTOR/UNIT LEADER REVIEW AND EVALUATION LETTER

- The Department Head or Unit Leader (as appropriate) will review the candidate's dossier materials, the Peer Review Committee Report, and the external review letters.
- Additionally, they will consider past faculty performance review documents. ○ If the candidate has a Joint Appointment, the Department Head will evaluate the candidate in all areas of their joint appointment (Research, Extension, and/or Teaching).
- The Department Head's letter of evaluation plus all materials assembled during the promotion evaluation process will be submitted to the appropriate AgriLife Associate Director(s).

8.1 Department Head and Center Director for Center-based faculty with Research Appointments

The Department Head and Center Director will both review all materials for these candidates and prepare their own independent evaluation letters. These letters are submitted to the appropriate Associate Director(s).

9.0 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR(S) REVIEWS

- The appropriate Associate Director(s) will evaluate packets that fall within their supervisory area and make a recommendation to the Agency Director(s).
- For joint appointments, the Associate Directors from both Agencies will discuss the candidate and submit a recommendation to the majority and minority appointment Directors, as appropriate.

10.0 DIRECTOR REVIEW

- For 100% appointments, the Agency Director determines the final decision about whether the candidate's request for promotion will be approved or denied.
- For candidates with joint appointments, the majority appointment Agency Director will confer with the minority appointment Agency Director and determine the appropriate path forward regarding promotion.

11.0 APPEAL PROCESS

In the event of a negative promotion decision, the faculty member is entitled to a written statement of reasons that contributed to that decision. If requested by the candidate, the supervisor(s) will provide a statement of rationale. If the Director recommends against promotion and that recommendation is contrary to the recommendation of the supervisor(s), then the Director shall inform the supervisor(s) and the candidate of the reasons for the decision.

- 11.1 The candidate has the right to present grievances concerning only the promotion process. Basis for an appeal regarding progression in rank exists when, in the opinion of the faculty member, one or more of the following has occurred:

11.2 There was a failure to follow the prescribed procedures.

- There was a failure to adhere to the established criteria for determining progression in rank.
- Faculty with concerns or grievances regarding other aspects of the process are encouraged to seek resolution through established supervisory channels before filing a written appeal. If the matter cannot be resolved, the faculty member may seek a hearing by an appeals committee.
- The written appeal shall include the basis for the appeal and must contain any supporting evidence and/or documentation. Written appeals concerning denial of progression in rank must be filed within 20 business days of notification of denial.
- If an appeal is requested, a seven-member Appeals Committee shall be appointed by the Agency Director(s) to review and/or hear individual appeals regarding progression in rank.
- The appellant may request to meet with the Appeals Committee to present his/her case. Such a request shall be included in the written appeal. If the appellant elects representation by an attorney, the appellant will notify the Director(s) Office at least five working days before the date the appeal is to be heard. The appellant will be solely responsible for any legal expenses incurred in such representation.
- The Appeals Committee shall consider the merits of the case and forward its written recommendation with supporting documentation to the Director(s) for final action within 20 business days from the end of the appeal hearing.
- The Director(s) shall notify the appellant in writing of acceptance or rejection of the Appeals Committee recommendation. Such notification shall be made within 60 business days of receipt of the written appeal.

12.0 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE FOR INFORMING FACULTY MEMBERS

Faculty members will be advised in a timely manner, in writing, of the recommendation for or against promotion at each level of the review. The following information delineates this notification process:

- A. Departmental Peer Review Committee—Department Head will notify on-campus AgriLife Research candidates upon receipt of recommendation from peer review committee. For off-campus AgriLife Research faculty, the Department Head will notify the respective Center Director who will notify the candidate regarding the recommendation from the peer review committee.
- B. Department and/or Center Director—Department Head and/or Center Director (as appropriate) notifies candidate upon submission of recommendation to the Director.
- C. AgriLife Peer Review Committee—Upon receipt of AgriLife Peer Review Committee's recommendation, Director notifies department head (on-campus faculty) or appropriate Center Director (off-campus AgriLife Research faculty with copy to department head), who notifies candidate (jointly, as appropriate).
- D. Vice Chancellor & Director—Following a review, the Vice Chancellor & Director notifies Department Head (for on-campus faculty) or Center Director (for off-campus faculty) of promotion recommendations, who notifies candidate (jointly, as appropriate).

13.0 MID-TERM REVIEW

Mid-term reviews are a valuable resource for Assistant Professors seeking future promotion to Associate Professor. The mid-term review should be scheduled as close to the third year from the date of hire as reasonable (during the end of the second year for review in the third year) (Appendix I).

- A mid-term review is intended to provide a formative review of the faculty member near the mid-point between the faculty member's date of hire and their request to be considered for promotion to associate professor.

- A mid-term review will familiarize the faculty member with the promotion process and ensure that the faculty member understands the expectations of those entities that will be responsible for the promotion decision.
- This review will ensure the faculty member has a clear understanding of the promotion process, their dossier, and their status and progress.
- This review should mimic the promotion review process as closely as possible, as described above, except External Review letters are not sought nor included.

14.0 MODIFICATION OF PROCESS GUIDELINES

These guidelines will be reviewed, and, if necessary, changes will be made after the first year of implementation; thereafter, the guidelines will be reviewed every three years (a) to identify unintended consequences and effects of these guidelines on faculty and Unit morale, retention, and recruitment, and (b) to propose any needed revisions.

CONTACT OFFICE

Questions about this procedure should be referred to AgriLife Human Resources at 979-845-2423.

REVISION HISTORY

Approved:	June 25, 1997
Revised:	July 22, 2002
	June 30, 2004
	September 1, 2008
	November 14, 2012
Reviewed:	July 30, 2014
Revised:	January 27, 2020
	April 30, 2020
	April 18, 2023

Next Scheduled Review: April 18, 2028