

**Auburn University Faculty Handbook**  
**Section 3.1: Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

**3.1.1 AAUP Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure ‡**

This statement is quoted from the AAUP Policy Documents and Reports, 2006, 3-4:

The purpose of this statement is to promote public understanding and support of academic freedom and tenure and agreement upon procedures to assure them in colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher [including “the investigator who is attached to an academic institution without teaching duties”] or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.

Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries duties correlative with rights.

Tenure is a means to certain ends; specifically: 1) freedom of teaching and research and of extramural activities, and 2) a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive to men and women of ability. Freedom and economic security, hence, tenure, are indispensable to the success of an institution in fulfilling its obligations to its students and to society.

**Academic Freedom**

1. Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties; but research for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding with the authorities of the institution.
2. Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject. Limitations of academic freedom because of religious or other aims of the institution should be clearly stated in writing at the time of the appointment.
3. College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write on matters of public interest as well as matters related to professional duties and the functioning of the University, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline. Academic responsibility implies the faithful performance of professional duties and obligations, the recognition of the demands of the scholarly enterprise, and the candor to make it clear that when one is speaking or writing on

matters of public interest, one is not speaking for the institution.

## **Academic Tenure**

After the expiration of a probationary period, teachers or investigators should have permanent or continuous tenure, and their service should be terminated only for adequate cause, except in the case of retirement for age, or under extraordinary circumstances because of financial exigencies.

In the interpretation of this principle it is understood that the following represents acceptable academic practice:

1. The precise terms and conditions of every appointment should be stated in writing and be in the possession of both institution and teacher before the appointment is consummated.
2. Beginning with appointment to the rank of full-time instructor or a higher rank, the probationary period should not exceed seven years, including within this period full-time service in all institutions of higher education; but subject to the proviso that when, after a term of probationary service of more than three years in one or more institutions, a teacher is called to another institution it may be agreed in writing that the new appointment is for a probationary period of not more than four years, even though thereby the person's total probationary period in the academic profession is extended beyond the normal maximum of seven years. Notice should be given at least one year prior to the expiration of the probationary period if the teacher is not to be continued in service after the expiration of that period.
3. During the probationary period a teacher should have the academic freedom that all other members of the faculty have.
4. Termination for cause of a continuous appointment, or the dismissal for cause of a teacher prior to the expiration of a term appointment, should, if possible, be considered by both a faculty committee and the governing board of the institution. In all cases where the facts are in dispute, the accused teacher should be informed before the hearing in writing of the charges and should have the opportunity to be heard in their own defense by all bodies that pass judgment upon the case. The teacher should be permitted to be accompanied by an advisor of their own choosing who may act as counsel. There should be a full stenographic record of the hearing available to the parties concerned. In the hearing of charges of incompetence the testimony should include that of teachers and other scholars, either from the teacher's own or from other institutions. Teachers on continuous appointment who are dismissed for reasons not involving moral turpitude should receive their salaries for at least a year from the date of notification of dismissal whether or not they are continued in their duties at the institution.

5. Termination of a continuous appointment because of financial exigency should be demonstrably bona fide.

### **3.1.2 Faculty Responsibility ‡**

Faculty members should recognize that with the protections afforded by academic freedom and by tenure they enjoy certain privileges not afforded to all members of society. Such protections carry responsibilities. It is incumbent on a faculty member to observe the policies and practices that are described in this handbook that pertain to the well-being of the University, the students, and society. To this end, faculty members must recognize their obligation to ensure that the University remains a place characterized by the free exchange of ideas, the pursuit of knowledge, and tolerance for the opinions of others.

It is also incumbent upon all faculty members to practice proper employment ethics. When evaluating the possibility of leaving the University relatively late in the academic year, a faculty member should consider in a professional manner any unfavorable consequences that might accrue to Auburn University, including commitments to the satisfactory completion or resolution of ongoing instructional, research, outreach, and service projects that would be adversely affected by the faculty member's departure on short notice.