

## **Guidelines for Establishing and Filling Positions in the Extension Title Series**

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### **Executive Summary**

The Extension title series is a professional series for the appointment of appropriately qualified individuals who contribute to the University's Extension mission by providing statewide programmatic leadership and scholarship (lead scholar) in a subject-matter discipline or areas of emphasis. Frequently, faculty members in this professional series have split appointments with the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station.

Criteria for appointment, performance review, and promotion in the Extension title series are included herein. Appointment, review, and promotion in the Extension title series require demonstrated ability to initiate and maintain a scholarly Extension program based upon personal research supported by contracts, grants, generated income, or other designated funds.

Appointments as an Extension Associate Professor or Extension Professor also requires evidence of prior or current success as a principal or co-principal investigator of grants, contracts, or generated income.

Appointees in the Extension title series are independent investigators under the supervision of the department head/chair or unit head. These appointments may have 9-month or 12-month contracts. They are eligible for all benefits except tenure, de facto tenure, and professional improvement leave. The Extension title series is not to be considered a substitute for postdoctoral positions or a means to extend a postdoctoral appointment beyond university time limits for postdoctoral appointments. All

Extension title series positions are continuous appointments subject to the availability of federal or state appropriated funding or funding generated from grants, contracts, or generated income.

To establish a position in the Extension title series, the initiating unit shall (1) prepare a proposal demonstrating the need for such a position and indicate the source, amount, and term of funding for the extension program; (2) obtain approvals of the proposal by the Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the dean of the college/school, the chief administrative officer of the concerned unit, and the provost; and (3) prepare a job description and identify space that is needed for the performance of extension educational programming. The proposal shall be transmitted to the dean of the college/school by the department head/chair or unit head with his or her indication that faculty have approved the position. The hiring of Extension faculty will follow normal university hiring procedures. Joint appointments require the approval of all deans and directors.

Procedures for promotion in the Extension title series will be specified by each department's governance document, and criteria must be approved by the college/school and the Provost's Office. Promotion decisions must correspond to the annual deadlines approved by the Provost's Office and be reported to the Provost's Office accordingly.

#### Appointment and Promotion in the Extension Title Series

- A. **Introduction:** In its role as a comprehensive land-grant institution, Auburn University has a need to continuously expand its pool of faculty in agriculture, engineering, and the sciences to deliver educational extension outreach programs in non-formal venues. These highly trained faculty are not a part of the tenure-track system but are very engaged in leading extension programs, conducting evidence-based research, collaborating with colleagues both internal and external to Auburn University, and engaging stakeholders to deliver research-based programming through varied educational activities. Extension faculty may help to assess educational programs and to measure impacts to evaluate program effectiveness, including return-on-investment. In addition to formal and non-formal teaching, these individuals expand education via curriculum development, websites, social media, videos, online instruction, digital publications, mobile apps, E-newsletters, and formal publications (i.e., books, book chapters, peer-reviewed publications, proceedings articles, newsletters, etc.). In order to meet these responsibilities, faculty members in the Extension title series generate extramural funding through contracts, grants, and user fees. To allow faculty members to fulfill these requirements more effectively and to become more competitive in attracting and retaining needed professional personnel, Auburn University herein establishes an Extension title series for appointments and promotions without tenure. This document defines and describes the Extension title series.
- B. **Definition:** The Extension title series is a professional series for appointment and promotion of appropriately qualified individuals who contribute to the University's Extension mission by providing statewide Extension programmatic leadership and scholarship in an assigned subject-matter discipline or area of emphasis. The Extension title series will establish an innovative, productive, and self-supported research program that contributes research-based information in support of their Extension program. Funding to support the research and Extension programs will be

generated through contracts, grants, generated income, or other designated funds. These appointments may have 9-month or 12-month contracts.

- C. **Teaching:** A faculty member on appointment in the Extension title series can have a regularly scheduled teaching appointment. However, there are strict federal regulations and restrictions regarding the use of Extension funding to support formal classroom teaching. Non-Extension funding must cover an appropriate percentage of the salary and fringe cost for an Extension title series who teaches an academic, for-credit course.
  
- D. **Establishment of a Position:** To establish a position in the Extension title series, the initiating unit shall (1) prepare a proposal demonstrating the need for such a position and indicate the source, amount, and term of funding; (2) prepare a job description and identify space that is needed for the performance of extension educational programming; and (3) obtain approvals of the proposal by the Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the dean of the college/school, and the provost. The proposal shall be transmitted to the dean of the college/school by the department head/chair or unit head with his or her indication that faculty have approved the position. The hiring of the Extension faculty will follow normal university hiring procedures. Joint appointments require approval of all deans involved as well as the Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.
  - a. **Initial Appointment:** Initial appointments are made as the result of normal recruiting procedures. Departments and units have some leeway in establishing the search procedures most appropriate for their particular circumstances. The department or unit might act as a committee of the whole or smaller screening committees might be used; a recommendation by a search committee might be transmitted to the department or unit as a whole for further consideration and then transmitted to the department head/chair or unit head; or it might be transmitted directly to the head/chair or unit head. It is appropriate that Regional Extension Agents be included on the search committee. Whatever the procedure, it should be established in advance of need by the department or unit as a whole. The department head/chair or unit head, in consultation with his or her faculty, should decide the on the positions needed and the qualifications of a successful candidate. Together they should develop a position description to be supplied to the candidates. The appointment of an internal candidate to fill a vacancy is a temporary solution and shall neither foreclose nor delay a national search to fill the originally vacated position. The internal candidate may subsequently compete in the national search.

The department head/chair or unit head and the search committee shall be guided by the Provost's Office and the Affirmative Action Office in framing an advertisement for the position, in seeking permission to advertise, and in recommending an appointment. Guidelines from the Affirmative Action Office help ensure compliance with federal law and help ensure an open and fair search.

When making recommendations for appointments in the Extension title series except those designated as temporary, the department head/chair or unit head shall confer with all available members of the department holding professorial ranks or, if the unit does not include professional faculty, with those holding continuing appointments. He or she shall transmit a written summary of the reactions of these faculty members, including a formal vote, along with appointment forms, through the appropriate dean and the Extension Director, to the provost. Where the faculty members do not concur in an initial appointment, the head/chair may submit a recommendation for appointment with his or her justification and a report of non-concurrence of the faculty. An appointment made without the support of the faculty may jeopardize the new hire, since the faculty will ultimately vote on promotion.

The doctorate is the terminal degree for most disciplines represented at Auburn University. Requests for exceptions must be presented to the provost with appropriate justification by the department head/chair, with faculty concurrence, and the dean. The appointment cannot be made without the approval in writing of the Provost's Office.

Each initial appointment must be confirmed by the appropriate department head/chair/unit head or dean in a written notice to the appointee after proper administrative approvals have been obtained. This letter constitutes the faculty member's written terms of the initial employment.

- E. **Areas of Activity:** Four areas of activity are important in the evaluation of individuals for appointment, performance review, and promotion in the Extension title series: (1) documented evidence of impactful Extension programming; (2) national and international professional status and scholarly productivity as indicated by evaluation statements from external peers; (3) ability to initiate and maintain a program of educational outreach supported by grants, contracts, generated income, or other designated funds; and (4) collegiality, as discussed for tenure track faculty in Section 3.6.2 of this *Faculty Handbook*. Guidelines relating to the first two areas of activity are described in Chapter 3 of this handbook; guidelines for the third area of activity are well-established in that the grant, contract, or other source of designated funds should cover salaries and costs of benefits for personnel, operating expenses, equipment, and overhead.
- F. **Ranks, Titles, and Criteria:** The ranks and related titles in the Extension title series shall be: (1) Extension Assistant Professor, (2) Extension Associate Professor, and (3) Extension Professor. Although it is not feasible to specify exact criteria for evaluating the credentials of an individual for appointment or promotion to any one particular rank in the Extension title series, the following statements are provided as guidelines. The following statements also provide an overview of the Extension title series.
  - 1. **Extension Assistant Professor:** The Extension Assistant Professor is the usual entry-level rank for a candidate who has completed the appropriate terminal degree (doctorate) in the specified field of study, possesses the equivalent in training, ability, and experience and meets the appropriate credentialing requirements.

Appointment to the rank of Extension Assistant Professor shall be made when it has been determined that the individual (1) has a current independent capability for conducting impactful extension educational programming supported by contracts, grants, or other designated funds; (2) has a potential for significant professional growth in the field of educational outreach; and (3) holds the academic degree in the field or is on track to complete the terminal degree in a defined length of time for degree completion. Following degree completion, the Extension Assistant Professor will remain in this rank until he or she attains credentials appropriate for promotion to Extension Associate Professor.

2. **Extension Associate Professor:** The Extension Associate Professor is a rank of distinction that is attained through successful performance of assigned duties. A candidate should hold the appropriate terminal degree (doctorate) in the appropriate field of study or the equivalent in training, ability, and experience and should meet appropriate credentialing requirements.

A candidate for Extension Associate Professor should have demonstrated mastery of the subject matter in his or her field and ability to apply it well in his or her educational outreach activities. Additionally, the candidate should have contributed, typically through significant work, to his or her area of specialization and participated in professional activities.

Criteria for promotion to Extension Associate Professor are specific to each department, according to approved guidelines, and must be approved by the Provost's Office. Promotion decisions will be determined by the specific department head/chair, the dean of the respective college or school, and the director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Promotion decisions must correspond to the annual deadlines approved by the Provost's Office and reported to the Provost's Office accordingly. As the chief academic officer of Auburn University, the provost retains the right to review all proposed promotions and act appropriately.

Appointment or promotion to the rank of Extension Associate Professor shall be made only after documented indication of continuous improvement and contribution by the individual in impactful extension educational scholarship and programming that are supported by obtaining extramural funding by grants, contracts, and generated income.

3. **Extension Professor:** The Extension Professor is a rank requiring professional peer recognition of the individual as an authority in his or her field of specialization. A candidate should be recognized by associates as being outstanding in leading extension educational activities. It is therefore expected that peers within and outside the University will attest to the candidate's high professional standing. A candidate should hold the appropriate terminal degree (doctorate) or the equivalent in training, ability, and experience and should meet appropriate credentialing requirements.

Criteria for promotion to Extension Professor are specific to each department, according to approved guidelines, and must be approved by the Provost's Office. Promotion decisions

will be determined by the specific department head/chair, the dean of the respective college or school, and the Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Promotion decisions must correspond to the annual deadlines approved by the Provost's Office and reported to the Provost's Office accordingly. As the chief academic officer of Auburn University, the provost retains the right to review all proposed promotions and act appropriately.

Appointment or promotion to the rank of Extension Professor shall be made only after documented indication of continuous improvement by the individual in impactful extension educational scholarship and programming that are supported by funding such as grants, contracts, and generated income.

- G. **Performance Evaluation:** All department heads/chairs and unit heads, such as center or institute directors, shall conduct at least one annual review before April 30 with each Extension track faculty member to evaluate his or her performance and to discuss his or her future development. For the review, the Extension faculty member will provide current vita and any supporting material to document performance and impact to the department head/chair or unit head of the Extension faculty member.

In a case in which an Extension faculty member has not achieved promotion to Extension Associate Professor or Extension Professor, particular care shall be taken by the department head/chair or unit head to relate the faculty member's job performance to the promotion criteria. Significant achievements or deficiencies that might enhance or impede the candidate's progress toward higher rank shall be noted.

The head/chair or unit head shall prepare a written summary statement covering major accomplishments, inconsistent performance, and future goals discussed in the conference. A copy of the report shall be provided to the Extension faculty member within a month of the conference. The Extension faculty member shall be asked to sign it as confirmation of having seen it. If the Extension faculty member does not agree with the material in the report, he or she may write a response to be appended to the report. One copy of the signed report and response, if there is one, is to be retained for the Extension faculty member's departmental personnel file and copied to the Office of the Provost; another copy is to be given to the extension faculty member. This report is confidential, available only for use of the concerned Extension faculty member and any University officials who have supervisory responsibility over the Extension faculty member.

Each department head/chair or unit head shall conduct a third-year review of all of its Extension Assistant Professor faculty members. As with the annual review, the head/chair or unit head shall request a current vita and any supporting material to document performance and impact. The particular focus of this review is the Extension faculty member's progress toward achieving promotion. The review, therefore, must address the specific departmental/college/ and Extension System expectations for promotion. The head/chair or unit head shall prepare a written report covering the findings of the review to cover strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations.

- H. **Promotion Criteria and Considerations for Extension Faculty:** An Extension faculty member is focused on educational Extension work and has the obligation to contribute to the scholarly literature and knowledge base of his or her discipline through findings generated from research and Extension scholarship. To a large extent, each discipline and each department must determine how much and what quality of Extension educational programming work is appropriate for promotion and assess its candidates accordingly.
- I. **Eligibility for Promotion:** There is no fixed requirement for years of service at a given rank before an Extension faculty member can be promoted. Except as otherwise required by law, an Extension faculty member on leave without pay cannot be a candidate for promotion while on leave.
- J. **Procedure for Promotion:** Promotion will follow a standard protocol in each department, and criteria must be approved by the Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES), the dean, and the Provost's Office. Promotion decisions will be determined by the specific department, the department head/chair, the dean of the respective college or school, and the director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES). As the chief academic officer of Auburn University, the provost retains the right to review all promotions and act accordingly.
- K. **Terms and Continuation of Appointment:** It has been the practice of the University for faculty appointments to be continued by mutual commitment and understanding rather than by formal contracts. All Extension title series positions are one-year contracts that may be reviewed annually or, if for a lesser period of time, the period of funding from the grant, contract, or other designated funds. Renewal is contingent upon funding available and upon performance. All appointees in the Extension title series will have annual, written employment contracts. Extension faculty will be appointed through letters-of-offer that state the starting salary that has been approved by all funding sources, benefits, and duties/responsibilities.

Letters containing promises not consistent with the Extension title series are not enforceable unless authorized in writing by the President of Auburn University.

All department heads/chairs and unit heads shall conduct at least one annual review with each faculty member to evaluate his or her performance and to discuss his or her future development in relation to continuation of appointment. The annual review criteria are established in Section F.

- L. **Dismissal:** Termination of an Extension faculty member during the contract term shall be effected by the University only for lack of funding or adequate cause, including but not limited to lack of collegiality and unprofessional behavior. If termination during the contract term is for other than lack of funding, the Chapter 3, Section 9.2 of this handbook provides that "Rights of due process shall also apply to a non-tenured faculty member dismissed before the completion of his or her contractual term." Dismissal shall not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom or other rights of American citizens.

In order to ensure that non-continuation is not used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom, an employee in the Extension title series is afforded the opportunity to appeal his or her non-continuation using the same procedure as provided in the handbook for tenure-track

faculty members who are given letters of non-continuation or by following the Scientific Misconduct Policy in Chapter 5 of this handbook.

- M. **Graduate Faculty:** A faculty member on appointment in the Extension title series may be proposed, recommended, and approved for membership in the graduate faculty as provided in this handbook. If the appointee in the Extension title series is approved for membership, the individual's participation as a member of the graduate faculty shall be limited to directing graduate theses and dissertations, teaching courses that he or she is qualified to teach according to accreditation guidelines, and to serving on committees appointed by the dean of the Graduate School in proportion to his or her other assignments.
- N. **Conditions of Employment:** A faculty member on appointment in the Extension title series is eligible for benefits as provided in this handbook or other applicable University policies, except tenure, de facto tenure, and professional improvement leave. University contributions toward retirement, social security, annual and sick leave, and insurance benefits for the faculty member shall be covered through the contract, grant, generated income, or other designated funds that provide support for the individual's position.
- O. **University Membership:** A faculty member serving in an Extension title shall be eligible to vote on all faculty matters, including faculty appointment and promotion, but not on tenure. A faculty member in the Extension title series may also vote on and/or be elected as the department's representative in the University Senate.
- P. **Change from Non-tenure Track to Tenure-Track Faculty:** If the appointment of a faculty member is changed from the Extension title series to tenure-track faculty through normal, faculty-approved, tenure-track hiring, years of service while on appointment in the Extension title series will be treated as full-time service in a faculty rank at another institution, as described in this handbook.
- Q. **AAUP Guidelines:** Auburn endorses AAUP guidelines stating that no more than 15 percent of the total instruction within an institution and no more than 25 percent of the total instruction within any department should be provided by faculty with nontenure-track appointments. In Auburn University's efforts to adhere to these guidelines, any exceptions to these percentages must be approved in writing by the provost.