

Guidelines for Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion of Fixed-Term Faculty and Annual Expectations
Department of Health Behavior and Health Education

Fixed-term faculty are vital to the success of the Department of Health Behavior and Education. Clinical track appointments serve the department and the school primarily through teaching and/or public health practice. Those in the research track primarily conduct either their own research or support other faculty research projects. In addition to their primary duties, FTF also may further the departmental mission through directing and serving on dissertation committees, leading and serving as members of administrative committees at the departmental, school, and university levels, advising students, and may serve as representatives of the department through their participation in regional, national, and international professional associations and meetings. Through their diverse activities, FTF enhance the visibility, productivity, and scope of professional activity of the department.

Process for Appointments and Promotion of Fixed-term Faculty

Fixed-term faculty may be appointed in either the Clinical or Research track at the Assistant, Associate or Professor ranks. Appointments may last for a term of anywhere from one to five years; three year appointments are standard. At the same time, fixed-term faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill are at-will employees, meaning that they are subject to discontinuation at the chair's discretion even prior to the end of their appointment period. Appointments and reappointments of research or clinical assistant professors, and lecturers, are reviewed administratively within the department, school and university but not by the school's APT committee. Appointments, reappointments, and promotions of fixed-term faculty are reviewed by the department's APT committee. Fixed-term faculty appointments at the associate professor level and above are also reviewed by the school's APT committee.

Promotions to the rank of Research or Clinical Associate Professor and above are reviewed both by the Department's and School's APT committees. Decisions regarding the promotion of fixed-term faculty are separate from decisions regarding their employment. Candidates for promotion should refer to the School's APT manual and the Department's HR specialist for the most current guidance on how to format promotion materials. It is expected that the Chair and the department APT committee will provide necessary guidance and mentoring to fixed-term faculty. The chair will make available to each faculty member copies of the University, School and Department Criteria and process for promotion at time of initial appointment.

The review process for promotion of fixed-term faculty is parallel to that for tenure track faculty. Negative decision on promotion may occur at the Department or School levels. In the case of a negative recommendation for promotion at the department level, the Chair informs the faculty member in writing after consultation with the Dean and the School's head of H.R.

In the case of a positive recommendation for promotion, the Chair, after consultation with the Department's APT committee and the tenured full professors, forwards the positive recommendation to the Dean. After review and approval by the appropriate university offices and committees, the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost will send the faculty member a formal appointment letter.

Faculty Development and Yearly Review

The primary responsibility to facilitate the career development of faculty rests with the Chair, supported by mentorship of each member of the faculty by her/his peers. The Chair is available to members of the faculty for advice and consultation at the initiative of each faculty member.

As with tenure track faculty, fixed-term faculty meet annually with the department chair to review their past year's work and to discuss responsibilities for the coming year. These meetings usually occur in May or June. All faculty are expected to participate in such an annual review meeting with the Chair. Comments are provided by the Chair during and after the review meeting which serve as an element in recommendations for salary raises.

Annual Departmental Expectations

Regardless of source or amount of external support or type of appointment, all faculty are expected to contribute to the general functioning of the Department through attendance at faculty meetings, giving occasional lectures in courses in their areas of expertise, mentoring students in their areas, etc.

On an individual basis, the Chair may negotiate with a fixed-term faculty member for additional and substantial service to the Department such as in teaching a course, coordinating an instructional program, etc. As compensation for such service, the Chair and the individual faculty member will negotiate a fair percentage of the faculty member's salary to be paid from Departmental funds.

Such individual arrangements for payment of fixed-term faculty from Departmental funds will be on a year-to-year basis with no commitment beyond the year of the agreement. Annually, the Chair will deliver a "state of the department" report to the faculty. That report will include an anonymized update of the percentages of all faculty members' salaries paid by Departmental funds, aggregated into the following four groupings: Tenure track Assistant Professors, Tenure track/tenured Associate Professors, Tenured Full Professors, and fixed-term faculty (all ranks presented together). Moreover, at all milestones for the faculty (e.g., contract renewal, reappointment, promotion, 5-year post-tenure review), the percentage effort covered by the department will be shared with APT members for all fixed-term faculty (similar to the way it will be done for tenure track/tenured).

Criteria for Promotion

Because of the variety of appointment types and the possibility of differing job expectations (e.g., clinical versus research track, leading one's own research projects versus working on others' research projects, teaching one or several courses, etc.) it is hard to specify criteria for promotion for fixed-term faculty. In general, however, the criteria entail scholarly contributions to the field and gaining support for one's research or other work.

Scholarly productivity

In general fixed-term faculty, particularly those in the research track are expected to publish in the professional scientific literature. The number of publications and other forms of scholarly productivity depends on the nature of the appointment and the specific expectations of the department as expressed by the Department chair in the faculty member's contract letter and annual review meetings.

For example, some research track faculty may be expected to lead major externally funded grants and, so, serve as first authors of major publications emerging from those grants. Others may be expected to serve as research directors of projects that are led by others, in which cases expectations for leadership roles in research publications may be relaxed. In other cases, development of technical reports, resources for the field (e.g., curricula or training manuals and protocols), or policy materials may be the reasonable products of endeavors. For those on the Clinical Track, development of publications, reports, or other materials guiding improvement of practice may be expected.

Cutting across all areas of publication or dissemination of work, it is expected that those proposed for promotion to the rank of associate professor will be able to document recognition for the excellence of their work, be that in peer reviewed journals, widely used practice materials, or reports and documents that are highly valued among their intended audiences. For those proposed for promotion to full professor, documentation of recognition of leadership in one's area of expertise (e.g., among others in the field, those contracting for services, or funding agencies) is also expected.

Because of the varied nature of these criteria and corresponding job expectations, it is critical that individual faculty receive clear specification of their job expectations and criteria for promotion through their annual meetings and communications with the department chair.

Research Support

As indicated above, expectations of both tenure track and fixed-term faculty are discussed with the Department Chair at each faculty member's annual review meeting. In general, fixed-term faculty on the research track are expected to apply for grants either as P.I.s or as co-investigators with other faculty. Fixed-term faculty on the Clinical track may be required to participate in grant applications or other types of contracts or applications for external funding of work, depending on the nature of their appointment. The specific amount of funding required of each fixed-term faculty member is determined annually in consultation with the Department chair. A general expectation is that fixed-term faculty cover 90-95% of their salary from outside sources, and would receive a buyout of effort for teaching a course or performing significant departmental service as determined by the chair. The percentage of salary coverage for teaching and service activities will vary according to agreed upon duties, as assigned by the department chair, together with years in the department, historical levels of funding, etc.

In addition to amount of funding, it is expected that those seeking promotion to the rank of associate professor will be able to document their serving in central or critical roles within their funded projects, and that those seeking promotion to the rank of full professor will be able to document major roles in funded projects, often as Principal Investigator or Program Director but also, as appropriate, in other roles reflecting high levels of scholarly or professional accomplishment and responsibility.