

# College of Arts and Sciences Professors of Practice Guidelines

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Professors of Practice, term-appointed faculty with a focus on instructional activities, make vital contributions to the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). The following guidelines describe CAS practices related to hiring, appointment, promotion, evaluation, and development of Professors of Practice; a term used in this document to encompass Practice faculty members of any rank. The College Guidelines take priority over unit guidelines. In the event of any inconsistency with University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) guidelines and policies, the UNL guidelines have priority.

<https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/evaluation-recognition/guidelines> and  
<https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/searches-appointments/appointments-templates>

## Appointments

Professors of Practice may be appointed one to three years as an Assistant Professor; one to four years as an Associate Professor; and one to five years as (full) Professor. Appointments must include an instructional apportionment of at least eighty percent. As described below, the specific responsibilities assigned to each faculty member will vary by department and must be clearly specified in the appointment contract.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Professors of Practice can have up to twenty percent of their apportionment outside of teaching, typically in research and/or service. Service responsibilities of Professors of Practice and assessment of achievement in service activities, will be determined using unit standards. Efforts

within assigned research apportionments may be related to the scholarship of teaching and learning. When assessing any area of effort, departments must scale expectations to apportionment. The instructional apportionment may include a mixture of teaching, advising, and/or curriculum support and development; for examples of activities considered part of an instructional appointment, see: [http://svcaa.unl.edu/documents/apportionment\\_categories.pdf](http://svcaa.unl.edu/documents/apportionment_categories.pdf). The specific mix of responsibilities may vary by unit and may shift over time, as long as the duties remain primarily directed (80% or more) to support of the instructional mission.

In units with graduate programs, these duties might encompass training and oversight of graduate teaching assistants. Note that instruction of graduate courses, service on graduate supervisory or examination committees, or advising/co-advising graduate students requires the formal approval of the Graduate College. See:

<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/about/graduate-faculty>

Given the potential variation in duties and responsibilities associated with Practice appointments, it is essential that appointing units provide expectations for performance. Offers and reappointment letters, or an accompanying MOU, must describe the formal apportionment of duties associated with the appointment, an idea of the expected teaching load at the listed apportionment, and standards guiding evaluations of Superior or better in each area of apportionment. These standards should also be set out in unit bylaws or policies and submitted as part of any hiring, reappointment, or promotion request. Professors of Practice should have access, through the appointing unit, to formal mentoring support.

Given their key role in the instructional mission, it is expected that Professors of Practice will have broad involvement in unit operations and governance. The College of Arts and Sciences, while recognizing variance in models of unit governance, maintains broad guidelines for the governance role of all faculty, including Professors of Practice: see [https://cas.unl.edu/docs/CAS\\_Handbook\\_7-2019.pdf](https://cas.unl.edu/docs/CAS_Handbook_7-2019.pdf). These guidelines are in turn subordinate to university guidelines, for example <https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/evaluation-recognition/guidelines>. The section below sets out basic expectations of the College in relation to the voting rights of Professors of Practice.

It is the expectation of the College that Professors of Practice will have full voting rights on questions related to unit operations and processes not involving faculty personnel matters. Professors of Practice serving as members of personnel, advisory, or executive committees may take part in any evaluations or recommendations coming from the committee.

Professors of Practice may vote on the promotion evaluations of any faculty member aspiring to the same or lesser rank, including tenure-line and research faculty, and on the reappointment of any non-tenure-line faculty of lesser rank. Professors of Practice, regardless of rank, do not vote as part of evaluations for tenure. (UNL *Guidelines*, section VI.D). College policy is that Professors of Practice do not vote on reappointment of pretenure faculty members or the decision to recommend tenure within an offer of employment. Because evaluations for promotion and tenure are often conducted in parallel, units must hold separate votes on the questions of promotion, tenure, and on the adjectives assigned to each area of apportionment.

## Hiring Professors of Practice

Given the essential role played by Professors of Practice, it is critical that we hire the best candidates for openings in these ranks. Just as with tenure-track faculty positions, the standard hiring path for Professors of Practice is through open national searches that have a focus on excellence in instructional activity. As part of the College's strategic goal of enhancing diversity, units are expected to plan and conduct recruiting and searches in an inclusive manner; see the CAS section on *Recruitment and Hiring* (under Administrative Tools; <https://cas.unl.edu/administrative-tools>).

## Reappointment Process

Fully promoted Professors of Practice are not required to undergo a formal reappointment review unless this is requested by the major appointing unit. Reappointment may instead be accomplished through a request originating with the unit director.

Reappointment reviews of Assistant and Associate Professors of Practice are typically conducted in the final year of the current contract. These reappointment reviews follow similar processes and have similar requirements as 4<sup>th</sup> year reviews of tenure-track faculty. Unit processes for reappointment must follow policies described in this document and at <https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/evaluation-recognition/guidelines>.

The reappointment evaluation should be prepared as per guidelines posted at <http://cas.unl.edu/p-t-candidate-file-preparation> and submitted through the CAS RPT system (<https://cas-rpt.unl.edu/>). Please note that reappointment evaluations for Professors of Practice do not include external reviews. The College requires a letter from the unit director detailing the vote(s) of the faculty review committee, vote on the question of reappointment, the recommended term of reappointment, and the department's rating of the candidate as *Outstanding*, *Superior*, *Good*, *Adequate*, or *Inadequate* in each area of apportionment. In a separate paragraph or section, the unit director is expected to provide an independent recommendation and set of ratings. This letter must be included in the candidate's file that is submitted to the Dean's Office using the CAS RPT system (<https://cas-rpt.unl.edu/>)

The results of this recommendation must be shared with the faculty member, who will have the opportunity to respond and/or request reconsideration of any negative decision at the unit level following procedures and guidelines similar to those in a promotion evaluation. There is no formal appeal of a negative reappointment review beyond the College level, other than through campus grievance processes.

A faculty member who will not be put up for reappointment as a result of a negative reappointment review must be given notice that they have one additional year on the faculty, after which the position will be terminated. See <https://nebraska.edu/-/media/unca/docs/offices-and-policies/policies/board-governing-documents/board-of-regents-bylaws.pdf?la=en> (Section 4.4.2) and <https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/searches-appointments/non-reappointment>.

Any decision not to reappoint a Professor of Practice must be informed by an evaluation and vote from an appropriate review committee. Units anticipating the possibility of nonappointment

should contact the Associate Dean for Faculty and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty and Academic Affairs at least a year prior to the end of the current appointment. In this circumstance, the unit may be counseled to hold a continuation review to determine whether the candidate will be considered for reappointment in the following year.<sup>1</sup>

## Promotion

Promotion to either Associate or Full Professor of Practice requires evidence of contributions to advancing learning, academic or professional instruction, and, more specifically, demonstrated excellence in instruction and pedagogy. Processes governing promotion in rank are described at <https://cas.unl.edu/administrative-tools> (See Promotion and Tenure/Processes) Peers and administrators evaluating a candidate for promotion to Professor should review documentation of the entire academic career to date with emphasis on the period in the current rank.

For promotion to Associate Professor of Practice there should be evidence of leadership in instructional activity and instructional accomplishments beyond the department, including university and disciplinary engagement. Note that the *CAS Handbook* states: For promotion to associate professor and the granting of tenure the candidate should have an overall rating of at least superior performance, taking into account the candidate's assignment, together with clear promise of continuing performance at this level.

For promotion to Full Professor of Practice, the instructional work should include evidence that the candidate's instructional activities and/or practice have resulted in national or international visibility, leadership, and/or impact. The *CAS Handbook* calls for "clear evidence of continued contribution in the areas of teaching, research, and service

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<sup>1</sup> The review, comprising an evaluation and formal vote from the faculty review committee, should be structured similarly to a reappointment evaluation in terms of timeline, materials to be submitted, and composition of the review committee. It is the College's expectation that a negative outcome to a continuation review will occur in the following circumstances: unsatisfactory performance, defined by the College as falling below an average rating of "good" for two review cycles within a three-year period; significant changes in instructional need; or extraordinary financial limitations. In cases where the continuation review is undertaken due to anticipation of significant changes in instructional need or extraordinary financial limitations, a summary of the anticipated changes and/or the financial limitations should be shared in advance with the faculty member, who may then choose what materials to submit as part of the continuation review.

The outcome of the review must be shared with the faculty member, who must be provided the opportunity to appeal a negative decision at the unit level, and to submit a response and/or appeal materials. Note that a positive recommendation in a continuation review is an affirmation that a reappointment review will be conducted; it is not an endorsement of reappointment. There is no appeal of a negative continuation review beyond the College level, other than through campus grievance processes.

significantly beyond the level of accomplishment expected for promotion to associate professor”, and notes that promotions to full professor should be accompanied by an overall rating of superior over a sustained period of time.” The UNL *Guidelines for Evaluation of Faculty* note that “**MOST** phases of the candidate's work must be judged excellent, evidencing a level of sustained creativity in the salient areas of the candidate's work. Such creativity is of the sort that would merit national recognition in appropriate arenas.”

There is no requirement that faculty of Practice seek promotion nor is there any time limit on when promotion can be sought. In analogy to the promotion of tenure-line faculty to Associate rank, the College anticipates that an Assistant Professor of Practice whose overall performance averages Superior or better would be able to meet the standards of promotion within six years in rank. Assistant Professors of Practice who have established a history of performance significantly exceeding expectations may choose to go up for promotion earlier; promotion after fewer than five years in appointment is extremely unusual.

The College of Arts and Sciences requires letters from a minimum of four external reviewers as part of any promotion evaluation. At least three letters must come from individuals who hold the rank of Full Professor, or the equivalent in an instructional rank, and who come from institutions classified as Carnegie Very High Research Activity (often described as “R1”). Assuming this core requirement is met, additional letters from renowned and fully promoted teaching faculty who are at non-R1 institutions (for example, an excellent liberal arts college) or in Associate rank at an R1 institution (for promotion to Associate Professor of Practice) may be acceptable. Contact with external reviewers is made by the unit conducting the review and only after obtaining permission from the College (through the Associate Dean for Faculty); for details, see [http://cas.unl.edu/docs/CAS\\_Policy\\_on\\_External\\_Reviews\\_May2021.pdf](http://cas.unl.edu/docs/CAS_Policy_on_External_Reviews_May2021.pdf).

External reviewers will be provided with an instructional portfolio for their review and asked to evaluate the candidate’s instructional and pedagogical contributions. The portfolio should highlight the candidate’s instructional contributions to the department, college, and university as well as (for promotion to full) evidence of leadership and impact in the discipline on matters of instruction and pedagogy. The reviewers will be provided with an overview of the Professor of Practice faculty evaluation criteria described above.

Candidates for promotion to Associate or Full Professor of Practice may choose to obtain letters from individuals internal to UNL who can speak to the qualities of the candidate’s instructional activity. These letters are comparable to peer-review documentation and can be included in the file as evidence of excellence. They do not count, however, as external review letters.

Candidates, if promoted, will be appointed with a new contract at the higher rank. If Departments vote not to promote a candidate who is in the final year of a contract, a vote on the candidate’s reappointment must occur. This reappointment vote can occur at the same meeting as the promotion vote or can be handled in a separate meeting.

See also [https://cas.unl.edu/docs/CAS\\_PandT\\_Processes\\_July\\_2021-v2.pdf](https://cas.unl.edu/docs/CAS_PandT_Processes_July_2021-v2.pdf). Unit and College promotion processes are subordinate to UNL policies described at:

<https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/evaluation-recognition/guidelines>  
<https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/evaluation-recognition/promotion-tenure>.

and

### Evaluations: Progress towards Promotion

Professors of Practice undergo annual evaluation at the same time as other faculty members in the unit. The evaluation must be based upon unit standards in teaching and any other areas of apportionment and should explicitly consider relative apportionments. Resources for preparing evaluations can be found in the SharePoint site for Chairs and Directors.

At intervals no greater than three years, there must be a substantive conversation with not fully promoted faculty regarding progress towards promotion or other advancement. These discussions should be confidential and involve input from a review body able to provide informed and confidential feedback. It is suggested that unit directors solicit input from the body responsible for the annual merit evaluation to inform this conversation about promotion.

### Professional Development

The College expects Professors of Practice to become instructional leaders in their disciplines and is committed to their professional development and growth.

The College places great emphasis on mentoring of faculty members. If problems arise, departments should take the initiative to help faculty achieve success. The College strongly encourages units to carefully consider the annual evaluations of Professors of Practice and, if there are any deficiencies in the record, to help the faculty members figure out how to improve their performance. Mentoring can play a vital role in this process.

The College encourages Professors of Practice to use the resources available to build a local, regional, national, and, if relevant, international record for instructional excellence. These resources include the opportunity to apply for a Faculty Development Leave after six years of full-time service, with full pay for a one-semester leave and half pay for an academic year leave. This is the same leave program available to tenure-line faculty. Given the critical instructional roles occupied by Professors of Practice, it may be more difficult for departments to cover duties during the leave semester. Accordingly, to not disadvantage Professors of Practice for leave consideration from their departments, the College will fund replacement costs for one-semester leaves conditional upon adequate documentation of need from the unit director.

Professors of Practice are eligible for CAS faculty travel funds to support reporting of creative activity (reading/presenting a paper or a poster or who are on the program of a conference or meeting as a panel chair, panel discussant, or conference/meeting organizer. See [https://cas.unl.edu/docs/TravelForm\\_2021-2022.pdf](https://cas.unl.edu/docs/TravelForm_2021-2022.pdf). Professors of Practice may apply for a number of CAS grants that support research and/or instructional improvement (<https://cas.unl.edu/college-faculty-funding-programs>) and are eligible for a number of College awards (<https://cas.unl.edu/faculty-staff-recognition>).