

Commission on Faculty Affairs
REVISIONS TO CHAPTER 4 OF THE FACULTY HANDBOOK
CFA 2026-27M

Resolution Proposal Form Sent to University Council Cabinet	~~Date~~ <u>September 25, 2026</u>
First Reading by Commission	~~Date~~ <u>October 16, 2026</u>
Approval by Commission	Date
First Reading by Senate	Date
Approval by Senate	Date
Faculty Senate Comment	Date
Staff Senate Comment	Date
Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Comment	Date
Graduate and Professional Student Senate Comment	Date
Undergraduate Student Senate Comment	Date
First Reading, University Council	Date
Approved, University Council	Date
Approved, President	Date
Approved, Board of Visitors	Date
Effective Date	Upon Approval or Date

WHEREAS, the *Faculty Handbook* specifies all policies related to the employment of faculty; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 4 of the Faculty Handbook provides policies related specifically to continued appointment and continued appointment track faculty, primarily located in the University Libraries.

WHEREAS, continued appointment and continued appointment-track faculty share many of the same professional concerns as tenured and tenure-track faculty (covered in Chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook); and

WHEREAS, changes were made to Chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook in 2025-26 that would also apply to faculty covered in Chapter 4; and

WHEREAS, as appropriate or applicable, it is important to maintain consistency with the policies defined in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Chapter 4 of the Faculty Handbook be revised to incorporate changes made to Chapter 3 in 2025-26 that are applicable to faculty covered in Chapter 4; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that changes to Chapter 4 include the following:

- Revisions to Section 4.3.1 that clarify the descriptions of part-time appointments reference the other, which can lead to confusion regarding the expectations and limitations of each ([CFA 2025-26I](#)).
- Revisions to Section 4.5.5 to include language regarding deferral of continued appointment cases due to legal entanglements ([CFA 2025-26B](#))
- Revisions to Section 4.9 (including 4.9.1, 4.9.2, and 4.9.3) regarding clarifications to the severe sanction and dismissal for cause processes ([CFA 2025-26F](#))
- Revisions to Section 4.10.2 to adjust and clarify the formal grievance process ([CFA 2025-26C](#))

CHAPTER FOUR: UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES FACULTY WITH CONTINUED APPOINTMENT OR ON THE CONTINUED APPOINTMENT-TRACK

4.0 Employment Policies for University Libraries Faculty with Continued Appointment or on the Continued Appointment-Track

The policies applicable to faculty members with continued appointment or on the continued appointment-track are covered in this chapter of the faculty handbook. Policies are in chapter seven of this handbook for University Libraries faculty who are not on the continued appointment track or on a continued appointment.

For more information, consult [University Libraries Employment](#).

Like tenure, continued appointment is for the protection of the academic freedom of University Libraries faculty who are engaged in creating new programs and scholarship.

As the primary means through which students and faculty gain access to the storehouse of organized knowledge, the [University Libraries](#) perform a unique and indispensable function in the educational process. In this function, faculty members of the University Libraries share many of the professional concerns of their colleagues in all the colleges. The university recognizes the need to protect the academic freedom of librarians in their responsibility to ensure the availability of information and ideas, no matter how controversial, so that teachers may freely teach, and students may freely learn.

Continued appointment is the equivalent of tenure in the university's colleges. Faculty members in the University Libraries may hold continued appointment or may be on the continued appointment-track; just as the college faculty may be tenured or on the tenure-track. Provisions for term (fixed period) appointments during a probationary period are parallel to those for members of the college faculty. Evaluation for continued appointment (in contrast to term appointment) is made no later than the sixth year of such a probationary period.

A University Libraries faculty member with continued appointment will have continued employment until retirement with termination of employment based only on unsatisfactory performance, proof of misconduct, discontinuance, or reduction in a segment of the university's research or educational program, or University Libraries reorganization because of changing patterns of University Libraries service or technological advances.

If a position held by a University Libraries faculty member with continued appointment is eliminated or changes to such a degree that the incumbent can no longer fulfill the requirements, every effort will be made to reassign the faculty member to another position. If the position of a University Libraries faculty member with continued appointment is terminated, it will not be re-established and refilled within a period of two years unless the appointment has been offered to and declined by the faculty member who was originally displaced.

The Library Faculty Association and the dean of University Libraries have developed procedures for probationary appointment, continued appointment, and promotion for faculty of the University Libraries, including evaluative criteria for promotion and continued appointment, to instill the highest professional standards in the University Libraries faculty. These procedures can be found at [University Libraries Employment](#).

Information on promotion and continued appointment is available at [Promotion and Tenure](#). The University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the provost.

The University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee is comprised of representatives from the libraries and colleges who serve in staggered terms. The schedule of these appointments can be found at [Promotion and Tenure](#).

4.1 Faculty Ranks for Continued Appointment Track and Continued Appointment Ranks: assistant professor, associate professor, professor

Specification of faculty rank in the University Libraries does not imply a particular rank in any college department. University Libraries faculty may be invited to hold concurrent adjunct status in a college department in order to formally recognize their contributions to the undergraduate or graduate program.

4.1.1 Instructor

The rank of instructor is for University Libraries faculty whose positions have been designated for continued appointment-track and who have not completed the terminal degree. Annual appointments may be renewed within the limits of a probationary period. Ordinarily, continued appointment would not be awarded at the instructor rank, although time spent at this rank counts in the probationary period leading to continued appointment. A master's degree or significant professional experience is the minimum expectation for appointment at this rank.

The dean of University Libraries with approval of the provost and president may recommend instructors in University Libraries for promotion to assistant professor. Final approval of continued appointment rests with the Board of Visitors.

Promotion of University Libraries faculty to the ranks of associate or professor is conducted in accordance with procedures in chapter four of this handbook, "Evaluation Procedures for Promotion and Continued Appointment."

4.1.2 Assistant Professor

The rank of assistant professor is the usual rank of initial appointment for faculty on the continued appointment-track. Appointment to the rank of assistant professor carries with it professional responsibilities in learning, discovery, and engagement. An assistant professor may be assigned responsibility for teaching graduate courses and for supervising master's theses and dissertations, as well as serving on graduate student

committees. The terminal degree appropriate to the field is expected for appointment to this rank. For more information, consult [Faculty Qualifications for Teaching](#).

4.1.3 Associate Professor

In addition to the requirements for assistant professor, a person appointed as associate professor must have demonstrated substantial professional achievements by evidence of an appropriate combination of outstanding teaching, creative scholarship, and recognized performance in University Libraries, or related academic and professional service.

4.1.4 Professor

In addition to the requirements for associate professor, appointment to the rank of professor is contingent upon national recognition as an outstanding scholar and educator.

4.2 Appointments with Continued Appointment

An offer of faculty appointment with continued appointment may be made with the review and approval of the appropriate supervisor, the Library Promotion and Continued Appointment (L-P&CA) Committee, the University Libraries dean, a subcommittee of the University Promotion and Continued Appointment committee, the provost, and the president. Final approval rests with the Board of Visitors.

The dean forwards to the provost and president for their consideration and decision: the candidate's application package, including cover letter, curriculum vitae, and at least two letters of reference which address the appointment of rank and continued appointment; documentation of the L-P&CA Committee's approval of rank and continued appointment and concurrence of the dean with as much supporting evidence as deemed appropriate; and a brief overview of the search itself including how many candidates applied, were interviewed, and what is the compelling case for the candidate.

In general, faculty recruited from a comparable university should be recommended for a position at Virginia Tech at a similar level to continued appointment. If the recommended appointment involves a promotion or the initial awarding of a continued appointment, the case must be strongly justified. If an individual is coming from a university with a less extensive research mission, the case must be strongly justified.

4.3 Work-Life Resources for Continued Appointment Track and Continued Appointment Faculty

Consult [Work-Life Resources](#) for information on dual career program, tenure clock extension, modified duties, caregiving, part-time employment, retirement transition and other university resources.

4.3.1 Temporary, Part-Time Appointments, Continued Appointment and Continued Appointment-Track

While continued appointment track and continued appointment positions are usually full-time, Virginia Tech recognizes the importance of allowing flexibility in the percent of

employment so that faculty members can better manage the balance between their professional work and family or personal obligations over a defined period, or perhaps permanently. This policy is intended to encourage departments and schools to accommodate reasonable requests for part-time appointments; however, part-time appointments are not an entitlement, and requests may be turned down when the faculty member and their supervisor cannot agree upon a workable plan.

Part-time appointments are either term or permanent. Term part-time appointments are in increments from one semester up to two years. During the duration of a part-time term appointment, terms of the appointment are only changed via the agreement of all parties. A term agreement must specify the date on which the faculty member is expected to return to full-time status. Renewal of a term appointment should be negotiated no less than three months before the end of the current term so that the supervisor can plan accordingly. For term part-time appointments, the dean can use the salary savings to replace the work of the faculty member on the part-time appointment.

Part-time appointments are made for any fraction 50 percent or greater of a full appointment; faculty members receive proportional salary. Faculty members considering such appointments are strongly encouraged to meet with the benefits office in Human Resources to gain a clear understanding of the consequences of the change to their benefits. Office and laboratory space may be adjusted for longer term or permanent part-time appointments.

When conducting a search for a continued appointment-track or continued-appointment position, advertisement is made for full-time continued appointment-track or continued-appointment positions and must have funding for a full-time hire. Advertisements include information about university policies for flexible appointments. If desired, the candidate or faculty member then requests and negotiates a part-time appointment at or after the point of hire if acceptable to the department or school.

Continued appointment-track faculty members may request a part-time appointment only for reasons of balancing work and family such as the arrival or care of a child, the care of a family member, or for personal circumstances related to the health of the faculty member. In addition, they may request a term part-time appointment only (with specific starting and ending dates), allowing the issue to be revisited on a defined cycle. While such term appointments can be renewed throughout the probationary period, a permanent part-time appointment may not be granted until continued appointment is awarded.

Continued appointment faculty members may request either term or permanent part-time appointments for reasons stated above, or to balance work at Virginia Tech with professional practice or significant community or public service. For example, a faculty member who wishes to serve as a consultant in addition to an appointment at Virginia

Tech; a faculty member who wishes to engage in entrepreneurial activity outside of university responsibilities; or a faculty member who runs for public office for a limited term and wishes to reduce the workload at Virginia Tech for that period.

Only the faculty member may initiate a request for conversion from full-time to part-time appointment. The reasons for the request for a change in the percentage of the appointment should be clearly stated. The supervisor should make a careful assessment of the needs of the library and work with the faculty member requesting the part-time appointment to facilitate the request whenever possible. The period for which this part-time appointment is granted shall be clearly stated (renewable terms from one semester up to two years, or permanent).

The part-time appointment must be documented via a written agreement that includes a careful and thorough statement of work expectations for the part-time appointment. Generally, faculty members continue to contribute to all areas of responsibility, but with reduced expectations proportional to the fractional appointment. Faculty members on part-time appointments are not excused from library or university service. The written agreement for either an initial appointment or a conversion of a full-time appointment to part-time status and any subsequent renewal requires the approval of the faculty member, their supervisor, the dean, and the provost.

An initial term part-time appointment, either continued appointment or continued appointment-track, may be approved to accommodate a dual career hire if funding is not immediately available to support a full-time position, or if the faculty member seeks a part-time appointment consistent with the intent of this policy. The expectation is that the subsequent reappointment, if recommended, is for a full-time position, unless the faculty member requests a renewal of the term part-time appointment in accordance with this policy. A part-time appointment created for a dual career hire is approved through the usual approval processes for dual career hires.

For permanent part-time tenured appointments with no end date, a return to a full-time appointment is not guaranteed and the faculty member remains entitled to the continued appointment position on a part-time basis only. However, an increase in the percentage of the appointment up to full-time may be renegotiated between the faculty member and their supervisor if mutually agreeable and funds are available. The dean determines the best way to cover the costs of the academic work in the case of conversion to a permanent part-time appointment.

Faculty members on part-time appointments retain all rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a continued appointment-track or continued appointment faculty member.

Part time continued appointment and continued appointment track appointments are either term or permanent. Term part-time appointments are in increments from one

semester up to two years. During the duration of a part-time term appointment, terms of the appointment are only changed via the agreement of all parties. A term agreement must specify the date on which the faculty member is expected to return to full-time status. Renewal of a term appointment should be negotiated no less than three months before the end of the current term so that the department can plan accordingly. For term part-time appointments, departments can use the salary savings to replace the work of the faculty member on the part-time appointment.

Only the faculty member may initiate a request for conversion from full-time to part-time appointment. The reasons for the request for a change in the percentage of the appointment should be clearly stated. The appropriate supervisor should make a careful assessment of the needs of the department and works with the faculty member requesting a part-time appointment to facilitate the request whenever possible. The period for which this part-time appointment is granted shall be clearly stated (renewable terms from one semester up to two years, or permanent). The written agreement should include a careful and thorough statement of work expectations for the part-time appointment. Generally, faculty members continue to contribute to all areas of responsibility, but with reduced expectations for accomplishment proportional to the fractional appointment. Service responsibilities for faculty members on part-time appointments are proportional to their appointments. Faculty members on part-time appointments are not excused from departmental, division, or university service because of the part-time appointments.

The written agreement for either an initial appointment or a conversion of a full-time appointment to part-time status and any subsequent renewal requires the approval of the faculty member, the appropriate supervisor, University Libraries dean and provost.

An initial term part-time appointment, either continued appointment or continued appointment track, may be approved to accommodate a dual-career hire if funding is not immediately available to support a full-time position, or if the faculty member seeks a part-time appointment consistent with the intent of this policy. The expectation is that the subsequent reappointment, if recommended, is for a full-time position, unless the faculty member requests a renewal of the term part-time appointment in accordance with these guidelines. A part-time appointment created for a dual-career hire is approved through the usual approval processes for dual-career hires.

Faculty members on part-time appointments, whether term or permanent, retain all rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a continued appointment and continued appointment-track faculty member.

4.3.2 Permanent, Part-Time Continued Appointments

For permanent part-time continued appointments with no end date, a return to a full-time appointment is not guaranteed. If holding continued appointment, the faculty member remains entitled to the continued appointment on the part-time basis only. However, an

increase in the percentage of the appointment up to full-time may be renegotiated between the faculty member and appropriate supervisor if mutually agreeable and funds are available. The department and the dean determine the best way to cover the costs of the work in the case of conversion to a permanent part-time appointment.

Faculty members on part-time appointments, whether term or permanent, retain all rights and responsibilities attendant to their appointment as a continued appointment and continued appointment-track faculty member.

Part-time appointments are made for any fraction 50 percent or greater of a full-time appointment; faculty members receive proportional salary. Faculty members considering such appointments are strongly encouraged to meet with representatives in the benefits office in Human Resources to gain a clear understanding of the consequences of the change to their benefits. Office and laboratory space may be adjusted for longer term or permanent part-time appointments.[RG1.1]

4.3.3 Dual Career

Virginia Tech recognizes that meeting the needs of today's professional couples is a key factor in recruiting and retaining new faculty, and that many prospective candidates for faculty positions have spouses or partners who are also seeking employment. Given limited funding, priority will be given to individuals with outstanding faculty credentials where the primary candidate is being recruited for a tenure-track faculty or senior administrative position. Dual career guidelines for department heads, chairs, and school directors are available at [Dual Career Program](#).

4.3.4 Modified Duties

For more information, consult the vice provost for faculty affairs memo "Guidance on Paid Parental Leave and Modified Duties" at [Vice Provost Memos](#).

The modified duties program recognizes the need for tenured and tenure track faculty members with special family circumstances to construct a modified workload and flexible schedule for a defined period of time. The faculty member works with the department head, chair, or school director on a modified schedule usually for one semester. In some cases, the Provost's Office may provide funding to allow the buyout of a faculty member's teaching to facilitate the modified schedule.

4.3.5 Extension of the Probationary Period

For more information, consult "Tenure Clock Extension" at [Work-Life Resources](#). A one-year probationary period extension shall be automatically granted to either parent (or both, if both parents are tenure-track or continued appointment-track faculty members). An extension of the probationary period may also be approved on a discretionary basis for other extenuating non-professional circumstances that have had a significant impact on the faculty member's productivity. The request should be made within a year of the

child's arrival in the family. A probationary period extension is granted in one-year increments.

4.4 Annual Evaluation and Salary Adjustments

The Board of Visitors delegates the authority to the president or the president's designee for selected faculty appointments and compensation actions as outlined in the Amended Delegation of Authority for Selected Personnel Actions dated June 11, 2024.

The Board of Visitors annually approves a faculty compensation plan, including the authorization of an annual merit process guided by the university's Faculty Handbook and processes provided by the commonwealth. The faculty compensation plan provides information about the promotion and tenure process; the annual evaluation and salary adjustment process for teaching and research (T&R) faculty, administrative and professional (A/P) faculty, and research faculty; salary adjustments within the evaluation period, and the pay structure.

Salary adjustments are based on merit; they are not automatic. Recommendations for salary adjustments originate with the department head or supervisor and are reviewed by the dean, the provost, and the president. Because salary adjustments are determined administratively on an annual basis and based significantly on the quality of the faculty member's response to assigned responsibility, they do not necessarily reflect an accurate measure of the full scope of the faculty member's professional development as evaluated by relevant committees in the tenure and promotion process.

Annual Faculty Activity Report (FAR). All faculty are required to report annually on their research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities, as applicable. Guidance on annual faculty reports is provided by department head, supervisor, or administrative unit, as appropriate. Submission of a faculty activity report (FAR) may be required for consideration for a merit adjustment.

Virginia Tech uses an electronic faculty activity data system to collect and manage information about research and scholarship, creative works, teaching, Extension, outreach, and service activities. This system supports the production of annual faculty activity reports, promotion and continued appointment dossiers, and CVs, as well as department or other administrative unit and university level reports. The system also enables deposit and claiming of scholarly works in the [VTechWorks](#) institutional repository and will feed public web profiles using [VT Experts](#). Training for faculty is available through Virginia Tech's [Professional Development Network](#) and for departments on request. Faculty members should consult with their department or supervisor on the use of electronic faculty activity reporting.

All departments are required to have written guidelines outlining the process and criteria used in faculty evaluations. The adoption of such guidelines promotes consistency and transparency in this important aspect of faculty life.

Every faculty member's professional performance is evaluated annually, and written feedback is provided separately from confirmation of any merit adjustments. The process begins with submission of a faculty activity report (FAR). All non-temporary faculty members must submit a FAR annually. These reports form part of the basis for performance evaluations, awarding merit adjustments, and promotion, continued appointment, and post-continued appointment reviews.

The University Libraries dean is responsible for conducting annual faculty evaluations, either independently or in consultation with an appropriately charged committee in accordance with University Libraries procedures. All evaluations must be in writing and include a discussion of contributions and accomplishments in all areas of the faculty member's responsibilities, comments on the faculty member's plans and goals, and any recommendations for improvement or change. Faculty members should receive their written evaluations within 90 days of submission of required materials, and they acknowledge receipt by signing and returning a copy for their University Libraries file, or the electronic equivalent. Acknowledging receipt of the evaluation does not imply agreement. If a faculty member substantially disagrees with the evaluation, he or she may submit a written response to the dean for inclusion in the personnel file.

In addition to their annual evaluation letters, all pre-continued appointment faculty members receive at least two thorough reviews during the six-year probationary period and written feedback on their progress toward continued appointment by the L-P&CA Committee (review committee) prior to reappointment.

Faculty members with part-time appointments are reviewed on the annual review cycle used for all faculty members in the department. For the purposes of annual review, the fraction of the appointment must be taken into account when considering the appropriate level of achievement in that year.

4.4.1 University Libraries Minimal Standards [OA2.1][OA2.2][RG2.3]

The University Libraries shall develop, maintain, and publish a statement of minimal standards for satisfactory faculty performance using the following process. [University Libraries standards](#)[OA3.1] should be written with the participation of faculty and approved by a vote of the continued appointment-track faculty. Standards developed and approved by the L-P&CA Committee and the dean are then reviewed and approved by the provost. Once approved, the standards are published and available to all faculty members in University Libraries. ~~Revisions of University Libraries also follow these procedures.~~[OA4.1][RG4.2][OA4.3]

The following guidance is provided for the development of University Libraries minimal standards:

The University Libraries should carefully assess and state the overall standards of professional performance and contribution considered minimally acceptable for continued appointment faculty. The University Libraries' evaluation mechanism should allow a distinction between performance that is deficient in one or more areas requiring improvement, and performance that is so seriously deficient as to merit the formal designation "unsatisfactory."

University Libraries' standards should embrace the entire scope of faculty contributions. Expectations recognize differences in faculty assignments within the same department or unit. University Libraries' standards should typically address the individual's skill, effort, and effectiveness in contributing to all aspects of the instructional mission; the individual's activity in and contributions to the discipline; the individual's contributions to the collective life of the University Libraries and university; and the individual's activity in and contributions to the university's outreach mission.

The University Libraries' statements should affirm support for the basic principles of academic freedom and should express tolerance for minority opinions, dissent from professional orthodoxies, and honest and civil disagreement with administrative actions.

Departmental statements should include the expectation that faculty with continued appointment will adhere to the standards of conduct and ethical behavior as stated in the Faculty Handbook and/or promulgated through other official channels.

4.4.2 Unsatisfactory Performance

For continued appointment and pre-continued appointment faculty members, failure to meet the minimal obligations and standards the department has stipulated for its faculty results in an "unsatisfactory" rating. Written notification of an unsatisfactory rating and the considerations upon which it was based is given to the faculty member, with a copy to the dean and provost.

A single unsatisfactory evaluation indicates a serious problem, which prompts remedial action. Faculty members may respond in writing with a letter to the appropriate supervisor for inclusion in their personnel file, or they may seek redress through either the reconciliation or grievance procedures. Two successive annual ratings of unsatisfactory performance for a faculty member with continued appointment results in a post-continued appointment review.

4.5 Reappointment, Promotion and/or Continued Appointment

Faculty members should contact the department head or supervisor for guidance on department and University Libraries expectations for promotion and continued

appointment. For more information, consult the “Procedures on Promotion and Continued Appointment: University Libraries” or [Promotion and Tenure](#).

The university is committed to academic freedom. Virginia Tech endorses the “1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure” of the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges (AAUP Bulletin, September 1970).

Eligibility. Eligibility for continued appointment consideration is limited to faculty members holding regular faculty appointments of 50 percent to 100 percent in the University Libraries. Continued appointment is not granted to faculty members with temporary appointments. Individuals holding continued appointment who are appointed to administrative positions, however, retain the status and privileges of continued appointment.

4.5.1 Probationary Period and Progress Reviews (pre-continued appointment)

The term “probationary period” is applied to the succession of term appointments, which an individual undertakes on a full-or part-time regular faculty appointment, and during which evaluation for reappointment and for an eventual continued appointment takes place.

Evaluations of University Libraries faculty during the probationary period are of two sorts: (1) annual evaluation of all library faculty by their supervisors and (2) reappointment review by the L-P&CA Committee in the candidate’s second and fourth year, in which the committee makes a recommendation to the dean of university libraries.

The beginning of the probationary period for faculty members on term appointments is taken as July 1 or August 10 of the calendar year in which their initial full-time appointment begins, depending on whether they are on a calendar year (CY) or academic year (AY) appointment, regardless of the month in which their services are initiated. (The probationary period for new faculty appointed for spring semester begins the following fall even though the spring contract period officially begins December 25.)

Under usual circumstances, library promotion and continued appointment committees review the professional progress and performance of pre-continued appointment faculty members twice during the probationary period, usually in their second and fourth or third and fifth years. The timing of the reviews depends upon the nature of the faculty member’s discipline and must be clearly indicated in written departmental policies. The terms of faculty offer (TOFO) identify the initial appointment period. Pre-continued appointment reviews may be delayed if there is an approved extension as described below. Changes or variations in the standard review cycle must be documented in writing.

The initial review for a part-time faculty member should be no later than the third year of service (regardless of percentage of employment) to give early feedback on their

progress. At least two reviews should be conducted for part-time faculty members during their probationary period; more are recommended. The anticipated schedule for such reviews for appointment and for the mandatory review for continued appointment should be documented in writing as part of the agreement for the part-time appointment. Changes should be agreed upon and documented by the faculty member and the department.

Reviews are substantive and thorough. At a minimum, library promotion and continued appointment committees must review the faculty member's relevant annual faculty activity reports, peer evaluations, and authored materials.

The pre-continued appointment reviews should analyze the faculty member's progress toward promotion and continued appointment and offer guidance regarding future activities and plans. Pre-continued appointment faculty should be encouraged to develop a narrative about their scholarship goals with special emphasis on the place of their research and creative activity. Although this narrative may change across time, creating the context for their work can assist candidates in understanding how to continue to develop professionally in a national and international context in preparation for promotion and continued appointment. The dean or director, the mentor(s), and the L-P&CA Committee should engage in discussions with instructors and assistant professors across the probationary period to encourage professional growth and development of the candidate's scholarly work.

All reviews must be in writing, with the faculty member acknowledging receipt by signing and returning a copy for the faculty member's division-level file. In addition, the L-P&CA Committee and the dean meet with the faculty member to discuss the review and recommendations. Individual faculty members are also encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior colleagues. Pre-continued appointment faculty members bear responsibility for understanding expectations for promotion and continued appointment and for meeting those expectations.

The initial appointment for instructors and assistant professors (or those appointed to higher ranks) without continued appointment is ordinarily for a period of not less than two years. Multiple-year reappointments may be subsequently recommended.

The maximum total period for full-time probationary appointments is six years unless an approved extension is granted. Decision about continued appointment, if not made earlier, is made in the sixth year of the probationary appointment. If the continued appointment decision made in the sixth year is negative, a one-year terminal appointment is offered.

Pre-continued appointment faculty members may request a term, part-time appointment as described in chapter four of this handbook "[Part-Time Continued Appointment and Continued Appointment-Track Appointments](#)", for reasons of balancing work and family

or personal health issues. In such cases, the probationary period is extended proportionately. For example, two years of service at 50 percent counts as one year of full-time service. The term appointment may be renewed. (A permanent part-time appointment may be requested and granted following award of continued appointment.)

In determining the mandatory continued appointment review year for those with partial appointments, general equivalency to full-time appointments is expected, so that approximately five years of full-time equivalent service is expected prior to the mandatory continued appointment review year if no continued appointment clock extensions have been granted; six years if one year of extension is granted, and seven years if two extensions are granted. (In summing partial years of service, a total resulting in a fraction equal to or less than .5 is rounded down, and a fraction greater than .5 is rounded up.) However, review for continued appointment must occur no later than the tenth year of service, resulting in somewhat less full-time equivalent service (4.5 years) for a faculty member with 50 percent appointment throughout all nine probationary years prior to review. If denied continued appointment following a mandatory review, a one- year terminal appointment is offered.

Faculty members on part-time appointments may request a continued appointment clock extension in accordance with procedures described in chapter four of this handbook [“Extension of the Probationary Period”](#) (Extensions are granted in one-year increments, not prorated by the part-time appointment percentage.) However, the extension is not approved if it results in a mandatory review date beyond the tenth year.

Up to three years of appropriate service at an accredited American four-year college or university may be credited toward the six-year probationary period, as specified in chapter four of this handbook [“Guidelines for the Calculation of Credit for Prior Faculty Service”](#).

A faculty member on probationary appointment who wishes to request a leave of absence consults with the dean about the effect of the leave on the probationary period, considering the professional development that the leave promises. The request for leave addresses this matter and the provost’s approval of the leave request specifies whether the leave is to be included in the probationary period.

4.5.1.1 Guidelines for the Calculation of Credit for Prior Faculty Service

For more information, consult the [Request for Credit for Prior Service Toward Probationary Period form](#).

At the time of a faculty member’s initial appointment to the University Libraries, the dean notifies the new faculty member of the faculty member’s status regarding continued appointment.

Excepting temporary appointments with limited terms, the faculty appointee is given clear notice of when their appointment will be considered for renewal and, if on the continued

appointment -track, when consideration for continued appointment will be given. In this latter calculation, appropriate full-time service in another accredited four-year American college or university is credited toward probationary service at Virginia Tech only if the appointed faculty member requests such credit.

In such a request, all prior service is presented if undertaken after the faculty member completes the terminal degree appropriate to the field. A maximum of three years may be credited toward probationary service at Virginia Tech. The request must be made in writing within one year of the initial appointment. The specification of credit for prior service toward the probationary period is subject to the approval of the provost on the recommendation of the dean of University Libraries.

4.5.1.2 Probationary Reappointment

Faculty members on probationary term appointments should make no presumption of reappointment. Procedures for term reappointment or the granting of continued appointment for members of the University Libraries faculty are developed by the University Libraries. A decision for non-reappointment to a term appointment, based primarily on performance evaluation, is final if reached by the L-P&CA Committee (review committee) and is sustained by the dean of University Libraries, as appropriate. Notice of non-reappointment is furnished according to the schedule in chapter two of this handbook "Retirement, Resignation, and Non-Reappointment." The specific reasons for the decision are provided to the faculty member in writing, if requested.

If the non-reappointment decision is reached by the dean in contradiction to the recommendation of the L-P&CA Committee, the faculty member may request that the non-reappointment decision be reviewed by the provost for a final decision.

The faculty member presents the appeal in writing as specified in chapter four of this handbook, "Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued Appointment, or Promotion." The provost may ask the University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee to review the case and make recommendations as an aid to that decision.

4.5.2 Guidelines and Evaluation for Promotion and Continued Appointment

Consult [University Libraries Employment](#) for more information on "Procedures on Promotion and Continued Appointment", as well as [Promotion and Tenure](#).

Promotion to a higher rank or an award of continued appointment may be granted to faculty members on a regular faculty appointment who demonstrate outstanding accomplishments in an appropriate combination of learning, discovery, engagement, and other professional activities. Every faculty member is expected to maintain a current curriculum vitae, with copies filed with the University Libraries. The curriculum vitae together with annual faculty activity reports, student or client evaluations, copies of

publications, reference letters, and other similar documents comprise a dossier, which furnishes the principal basis for promotion and continued appointment decisions.

The evaluation of candidates for continued appointment closely parallels the process for tenure consideration for college faculty, and incorporates the same, or similar, elements of procedure whenever relevant or reasonable. Given the small number of faculty members on the continued appointment-track, their dossiers are reviewed at two levels (rather than three as required for faculty members in the colleges): first by the L-P&CA Committee and dean of University Libraries, and second by the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee and the provost.

Although some participants in the review process may serve at more than one level, participants may only vote once on a case. A faculty member may not serve on any committee that is evaluating a spouse, family member, or other individual with whom the faculty member has a close personal relationship.

Because the job descriptions and responsibilities of the candidates being considered do not conform to a single pattern or norm, it is not possible to set forth a statement of criteria with reference to which all recommendations for promotion or continued appointment must be made. Nevertheless, members of the general faculty seeking continued appointment or promotion in faculty rank are generally expected to have records of outstanding accomplishment in an appropriate combination of the following categories:

Professional responsibilities: Fulfilling the responsibilities of the position within the organizational unit by effective staff work, display of leadership, and a high degree of initiative.

Research and scholarly activities: Publishing in journals, presenting papers at professional meetings, developing other works of creative scholarship, organizing or chairing sessions at professional meetings, and fulfilling instructional responsibilities or graduate student advising.

University activities: Participating in the conduct of the activities of the administrative unit and the university. Such service takes innumerable forms, including serving on committees or in faculty governance positions, or participating in seminars or conferences.

External activities: Participating in local, state, regional, and national professional associations. Such participation includes activities such as holding office, serving on committees, conducting workshops, serving on panels, and attending conferences, conventions, or meetings.

Awards and honors: Receiving awards, grants, and honorary titles or being selected for membership in honorary societies.

Activities and accomplishments in other appropriate areas, beyond these five, may be included in dossiers and are considered.

University Libraries faculty are expected to develop within this framework the performance criteria that are most relevant to the responsibilities of those units. These criteria serve both as an aid to faculty development and as a set of measures that the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee may apply.

The criteria by which faculty with part-time appointments are evaluated for continued appointment is the same as the criteria by which full-time faculty are evaluated. Promotion and continued appointment committees consider years of full-time equivalent service when reaching decisions, excluding any approved probationary period extensions granted under the extending the tenure or continued appointment clock policy.

Besides consideration of specific professional criteria, evaluation for promotion or continued appointment should consider the candidate's integrity, professional conduct, and ethics. To the extent that such considerations are significant factors in reaching a negative recommendation, they should be documented as part of the formal review process.

4.5.3 Evaluation for Promotion and/or Continued Appointment by University Libraries Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee (Review Committee)

The University Libraries has a committee with appropriate faculty representation to evaluate candidates for promotion and/or continued appointment. Consult [University Libraries Employment](#) for more information on "Procedures on Promotion and Continued Appointment".

The University Libraries review committee makes recommendations to the dean of University Libraries. The dean may chair the committee or remain separate from the committee's deliberations and subsequently receive its recommendations. The review committee reviews the cases of candidates for promotion and/or continued appointment including those faculty members in the final probationary year. The dean furnishes the committee with a dossier for each candidate.

Rules governing eligibility and selection of members to serve on the review committee and operating guidelines for the review committee's deliberations must be documented in written University Libraries-level policies, formally approved by the faculty.

The University Libraries faculty determine who is eligible to serve on the review committee from among faculty members with continued appointment.

The review committee may include appropriate supervisors; however, these members may not vote on cases from their departments since each has already had an opportunity to vote or make a recommendation on those candidates.

If possible, some significant element of faculty choice should be a part of the review committee selection procedure. Where small numbers make an election process impractical, the dean appoints the representative.

If University Libraries supervisors serve on the review committees, their total number is less than that of other faculty members.

Review committee appointments should be staggered to assure continuity from one year's deliberation to the next. If possible, members should not serve for more than two successive terms.

Selection of the review committee chair is determined in accordance with policies approved by the libraries faculty.

The dean may be present at the review committee's deliberations. The dean serves in an advisory capacity to the review committee to assure compliance with university procedures and fairness and equity of treatment of candidates. The dean does not vote on review committee recommendations but provides a separate recommendation to the provost.

Faculty members appointed to serve on the university-level promotion and continued appointment committee are encouraged to observe the deliberations of the University Libraries review committee to better prepare for their roles but should not participate or attempt to influence the review committee's recommendations.

The review committee makes a recommendation on each candidate to the dean of University Libraries, including a written evaluation that assesses the quality of the candidate's performance in each relevant area. The division of the vote is conveyed to the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee and the provost but must otherwise remain confidential outside the review committee. In the absence of a unanimous recommendation, a minority report may be included. Whenever the dean does not concur with the committee's recommendation, the committee is so notified.

Evaluation for continued appointment is mandated in the sixth year of probationary service unless the faculty member has given written notice of resignation from the faculty. If the review committee feels that the faculty member's record does not warrant a continued appointment, there is an automatic review of the candidate's dossier by the dean of University Libraries. If the dean concurs, the faculty member is notified by the dean, in writing, of the decision and the specific reasons for it.

The review committee may ask the candidate to appear before the committee to present additional information or clarification of recommendations.

4.5.4 Review and Recommendations by the Dean of University Libraries

The dean of University Libraries will send forward to the provost the complete dossier of every candidate for whom there is a positive recommendation from either the L-P&CA Committee (review committee) or the dean, or both. The dean prepares separate letters of recommendation to be forwarded with the dossiers from their department. Whenever the dean does not concur with the library promotion and continued appointment committee's recommendation, the review committee is so notified.

The dossiers that the dean sends to the provost are accompanied by a statement describing the formation and procedures of the review committee and a summary of the number of candidates considered by the University Libraries in each category. The division of the vote is conveyed to the university-level committee and provost but must otherwise remain confidential.

4.5.5 The University-level Committee Evaluation for Promotion and Continued Appointment

The University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee (university-level committee) is appointed and chaired by the provost or the provost's designee. The university-level committee reviews the qualifications of the candidates recommended for promotion and/or continued appointment by the dean of University Libraries. It also reviews those cases in which the dean does not concur with positive recommendations of the L-P&CA Committee (review committee). (A university-level committee review of a case with differing recommendations by the library dean and the review committee is automatic and does not require an appeal.) The purpose of the review is to verify that the recommendations are consistent with the evidence, reflecting university standards, and that they are consistent with university objectives, programmatic plans, and budgetary constraints.

The university-level committee makes a recommendation on each candidate to the provost. The provost makes recommendations to the president, informing the university-level committee of those recommendations, including the basis for any non-concurrence with the university-level committee's recommendations. The provost informs the president of any variation between the provost's recommendations and those of the university-level committee.

In certain cases involving a faculty member who is the subject of an unresolved legal matter, the faculty member may request that the provost defer making a recommendation to the president. If the provost agrees that the deferral is warranted, the recommendation to the president will be deferred for increments of one year. If the provost declines the request, a recommendation to the president is made. If the case is deferred, the provost

shall make a recommendation to the president as soon as practicable after the legal matter has been fully resolved, and the case shall then be brought forward to the Board of Visitors for its consideration, as appropriate. The provost's decision on deferment is final.[RG5.1]

The president makes recommendations to the Board of Visitors. The Board of Visitors makes the final decision.

The provost notifies the dean of any negative decision reached by the provost, the president, or the Board of Visitors. The dean notifies the faculty member, in writing, and notes appeal options.

The university-level committee consists of the dean of the University Libraries; three University Library faculty members with continued appointment; and two faculty members at the associate or professor level with tenure in one of the colleges. The provost asks for nominations to the university-level committee from the University Libraries faculty. Where possible, some significant element of faculty choice should be part of the selection procedure.

All members of the university-level committee hold voting privileges. Regardless of the size of the committee, the faculty must always have at least a majority of the potential votes. Consistent with the principle that participants at all levels of the promotion and continued appointment review process vote only once on an individual case, the dean does not vote on cases from the University Libraries. Similarly, faculty members serving on the university-level committee do not vote on any case they previously voted on, should this circumstance occur.

Members of the university-level committee with continued appointment in the University Libraries hold staggered terms of three years; university-level committee members with tenure in a college hold staggered terms of two years; the provost makes the committee appointments. The provost or designee chairs the committee but does not vote.

All voting within the committee should be by written secret ballot; the division of any ballot must remain confidential.

4.5.6 Continued Appointment Decision

Occasionally faculty members are evaluated for continued appointment during the probationary period, but before the final probationary year. In such a case, there is no recourse to appeal or review of a negative decision, at whatever level it is reached, because of the certainty that the evaluation will be undertaken again within a limited time.

If a faculty member is denied continued appointment in a mandatory review by both the L-P&CA Committee (review committee) and the dean of University Libraries, the faculty

member may appeal the negative decision in writing in accordance with provisions of this section.

The appeal is submitted to the provost for review by the university-level committee for Promotion and Continued Appointment, which shall make a recommendation to the provost for a final decision. No further appeal is provided. The university-level committee may choose to hear oral arguments. Substantive procedural violations may be addressed through the grievance process described in chapter four of this handbook, [“Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures”](#).

Should the university-level committee find reason to believe that the review committee’s evaluation was biased or was significantly influenced by improper considerations, the university-level committee may request that the dean form a new ad hoc review committee. The ad hoc committee makes a recommendation to the university-level committee that requested its formation. The university-level committee then makes a recommendation to the provost.

Should the provost not concur with a positive recommendation from the university-level committee, whether that recommendation culminates a usual review or an appeal, the faculty member is so notified in writing of the specific reason for the decision. The faculty member may appeal to the [Faculty Review Committee](#). That committee investigates the case and, if the differences cannot be reconciled, makes a recommendation to the president on the matter. The president’s decision is final.

4.5.7 Promotion Consideration and Decision

There is no specification for minimum or maximum time of service in any rank. A faculty member may request at any time consideration for promotion in rank if the L-P&CA Committee (review committee) has not chosen to undertake such an evaluation.

However, appeal of a negative promotion decision is provided only if the faculty member has been in rank for at least six years and if the faculty member has formally requested, in writing, consideration for promotion in a previous year. Candidates for promotion who have been denied by both the review committee and the dean of University Libraries may appeal to the provost, who asks the University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee (university-level committee) to consider the appeal. The faculty member presents the appeal in writing as specified in chapter four of this handbook, “Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued Appointment, or Promotion.” The university-level committee makes recommendations to the provost. If the university-level committee and the provost concur with the negative decision, the decision is final; if not, the president makes a final decision.

4.5.8 Review of Progress Toward Promotion to Professor

Faculty awarded continued appointment at the rank of assistant or associate professor are required to go through at least one review of progress toward promotion. The review is required for faculty members promoted and awarded continued appointment during 2019-2020 and thereafter.

This review will take place by the fifth year after continued appointment, or the last promotion was awarded. The faculty member can elect to submit a review prior to the fifth-year deadline; otherwise by the fifth year the faculty member will receive a notice to submit a review. All reviews of progress towards promotion will be conducted by an appropriate library committee (review committee). The review committee will provide a recommendation letter to the candidate prior to the next promotion and continued appointment review cycle.

Candidates undergoing a review of progress towards promotion will submit to the review committee documentation based on [University Libraries policies](#) highlighting the contributions and service since continued appointment or the last promotion was awarded. The review committee will provide feedback focusing on the faculty member's progress toward promotion. The developmental guidance should focus on recommended future activities and plans that will position the faculty member for promotion. Review committee recommendation letters will be in writing; in addition, the faculty member may request a meeting with the review committee to discuss the review and recommendations. Individual faculty members are also encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior colleagues and/or supervisor(s).

4.6 Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued Appointment, or Promotion

A faculty member who is notified of a negative decision following evaluation for a term reappointment during the probationary period, for continued appointment, or for promotion may appeal for review of the decision under conditions and procedures specified in this section. The appellant has a right to an explanation of the reasons contributing to the denial.

Such an appeal must be filed, in writing, within 14 calendar days of formal notification of the decision, which shall refer to appeal procedures. The appeal can only be based on the grounds that certain relevant information was not provided or considered in the decision, or that the decision was influenced by improper consideration.

In their recommendations, administrators and committees hearing an appeal should address the standards outlined in the previous paragraph. In particular, they shall not substitute their own judgment on the merits for that of the body or individual that made the decision under appeal. The recommendations should address the allegations in the appeal with specificity and cite appropriate evidence.

Appeals should be resolved as quickly as possible without compromising fairness or thoroughness of review. Whenever possible, the goal should be to achieve a final resolution in time to accommodate the first meeting of the Board of Visitors in the fall semester.

A faculty member who believes that the appeal procedures described in this section have been improperly followed may, at any point, seek advice from the [director of faculty reconciliation](#) and/or file a grievance in accordance with the grievance procedure in chapter four of this handbook, "[Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures](#)".

4.7 Research Leaves

For more information, consult [Research Leaves](#).

Study-Research Leave. Study-research leave may be granted to faculty members for research and/or advanced study necessary to enhance the competencies of those faculty members to conduct their obligations to the university.

Full-time faculty members holding continued appointment with significant responsibility for instruction and scholarly productivity, with the rank of assistant professor or higher, having accrued a minimum of six years of service, are eligible for study-research leave. Requests may be submitted prior to completion of six years of service, but faculty members must have continued appointment and have completed the sixth year before the leave period begins.

Following such a leave, an additional six years of full-time service are necessary before a faculty member is eligible for another leave. Time spent on study-research leave, educational leave, or leave without pay is not considered in compiling minimum service requirements for further leaves.

As part of the commonwealth's educational leave program, recipients of study-research leaves are provided with partial salary (not to exceed one-half salary). Full employee benefits remain in force while faculty members are on study-research leaves. Calendar year faculty on study-research leave earn annual leave at a rate of half their usual annual leave earnings.

Instead of a proposal for leave of an entire academic or calendar year, faculty members may propose a sequence of semester leave periods at half-salary over several years, not to exceed in total one academic year (for a faculty member on academic year appointment) or 12 months (for a faculty member on calendar year appointment). If such a sequence of leaves is undertaken, all intervening periods of full-time appointment at Virginia Tech accrue toward the six-year minimum service required before eligibility for another study-research leave or sequence of leaves.

Alternatively, following completion of any study-research leave, faculty members may propose a single semester of study-research leave at half-salary following three years of full-time service to the university.

Recipients of a study-research leave may receive additional compensation from other approved sources up to a total equal to their annual salary from the university. Faculty members may receive an additional half salary from sponsored grants or contracts, resulting in a one-year period at full salary from university sources; the appropriate level of effort must be expended on grant-related activities. They may also obtain additional funds from external sources to cover expenses for travel, research, administrative assistance, and the purchase of relevant materials. The appropriate supervisor and provost review and approve required documentation of all external earnings and expected payments. Engagement in consulting activities or other activities and interests including collaborations with other public and private institutions and services to potential university stakeholders should be disclosed in accordance with existing university policy, including Policy 1045, “Disclosure Requirements for Activities and Interests (Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy)”.

The request for study-research leave is made in the fall and, if approved, is taken the following academic year. Requests for study-research leave should be submitted to the appropriate supervisor by November 1 for processing through the University Libraries and provost. The application should include a detailed description of the proposed research or other scholarly project, the location of that activity, and the relevance of the proposed activity in contributing to the faculty member’s own scholarly research program. The department head or supervisor reviews the application and forwards it with a recommendation to the dean indicating the provisions that will be made to accommodate the faculty member’s responsibilities.

The dean is expected to weigh fiscal and academic load considerations to assure an equitable distribution of the awards. The dean reviews and forwards study-research leave requests to the provost by mid-November. The provost reviews the recommendations, communicates with the deans as appropriate, and announces the results to each candidate. Deadlines are established annually and available on [Research Leaves](#) and on the [Important Dates calendar](#).

Changes to approved study-research leaves require department/unit, college and provost approval. These changes include:

- Postponement of study-research leave for up to 1 year;
- Change from a full year study-research leave to a half-year leave (or vice-versa);
- Change from a study-research leave to a research-assignment leave (or vice-versa);
- Change in the location of the study-research leave;

- Cancellation of study-research leave.

The faculty member must return to full-time service with the university for a minimum of at least one academic year at the end of the approved leave or repay the university the salary received plus interest. If less than this required period of service is met, repayment is required proportional to the compensation provided by the university during the leave period. The faculty member, before undertaking the leave, must sign a memorandum of agreement to this effect.

Within 60 days of returning to full-time status, the faculty member must send a letter to the provost, dean, and department head, chair, or school director summarizing their accomplishments.

Research Assignment. Research assignment is a special category of study-research leave that is awarded to a faculty member with continued appointment for one semester of intensive study or research that increases the quality of the individual's professional stature and future contributions to the university. It may be taken in lieu of an ordinary yearlong study-research leave.

Full-time faculty members holding continued appointment with the rank of associate professor or higher, having accrued a minimum of six years of service, are eligible for research assignment leave. Following such a leave, an additional six years of full-time service is necessary before a faculty member may be considered for another research assignment. Requests may be submitted prior to completion of six years of service, but faculty members must have completed the sixth year before the leave period begins. Faculty members on calendar year appointments may take research assignment leave for up to six months.

Approval for research assignment provides the faculty member with full salary and related benefits for the period of the leave; faculty members may not take on additional responsibilities for outside income except as allowed by the university's consulting policy. Modest stipends associated with competitive visiting scholar programs at other institutions, competitive national or international fellowships, or similar prestigious opportunities to support study and/or scholarly research may be approved where there is clear benefit to the faculty member and the university. Similarly, externally funded reimbursements or allotments for travel, temporary relocation, and other expenses associated with the proposed research assignment may be approved. Documentation of all external earnings and expected payments is required and must be reviewed and approved by the department head, chair, or school director, dean and provost.

When a faculty member proposes a period of paid employment greater than 50 percent of the annual salary in a corporate or governmental setting, leave without pay or a contract

through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act may be more appropriate than a research assignment.

The primary privilege of a research assignment is entire relief from faculty duties for one semester. A secondary privilege is that the assignment may be carried out at any location approved by the dean, although research programs that require facilities, resources from the University Libraries, or collaborations not available at the university are given special consideration.

An application for research assignment should be submitted to the appropriate department head, chair, or school director in the academic year preceding that in which the research assignment will be made using the following deadlines:

- **November 1:** for research assignments occurring in the fall semester of the following academic year
- **February 1:** for research assignments occurring in the spring semester of the following academic year.

The application should include a detailed description of the proposed research or other scholarly project, the location of that activity, and the relevance of the proposed activity in contributing to the faculty member's own scholarly research program. The department head, chair, or school director reviews the application and forwards it with a recommendation to the college dean indicating the provisions that will be made to accommodate the faculty member's teaching and advising responsibilities.

The dean is expected to weigh fiscal and academic load considerations to assure an equitable distribution of the awards. The dean reviews and forwards research assignment requests to the provost by mid-December (for fall research assignment leaves) or mid-March (for spring research assignment leaves). The provost reviews the recommendations, communicates with the deans, and announces the results to each candidate. [Deadlines](#) are established annually and available at [Research Leaves](#) and on the [Important Dates calendar](#).

Changes to approved research assignment leaves require department/unit, college and provost approval. These changes include:

- Postponement of research-assignment leave for up to 1 year;
- Change from a research-assignment to a study-research leave (or vice-versa);
- Change in the location of the research-assignment leave;
- Cancellation of research-assignment leave.

The faculty member must return to full-time service with the university for a minimum of at least one academic year at the end of the approved leave. If less than this required period of service is met, repayment is required of a proportion of the compensation provided by the university during the leave period. The faculty member, before

undertaking the research assignment leave, must sign a memorandum of agreement to this effect.

Within 60 days of returning to full-time status, the faculty member must send a letter to the provost, dean, and department head, chair, or school director summarizing their accomplishments.

4.8 Post-Continued Appointment Review

Nothing in this section should be interpreted as abridging the university's right to proceed directly to dismissal for cause as defined in chapter four of this handbook, "Dismissal for Cause," or the right of individual faculty members to pursue existing mechanisms of reconciliation and redress.

A post-continued appointment review is mandatory whenever a faculty member with continued appointment receives two consecutive annual evaluations of unsatisfactory performance. For more information, consult [University Libraries Employment](#). Annual reviews for years spent on leave without pay are disregarded for the purpose of this calculation. The L-P&CA Committee (review committee) conducts the review unless the same committee was involved in the original unsatisfactory annual evaluations. In this case, the University Libraries faculty elect a committee to carry out the review function.

Upon recommendation of the dean, a post-continued appointment review may be waived or postponed if there are extenuating circumstances (such as health problems). The purpose of a post-continued appointment review is to focus the perspective of faculty peers on the full scope of a faculty member's professional competence, performance, and contributions to the University Libraries and university missions and priorities.

The faculty member has both the right and the obligation to provide a dossier with all documents, materials, and statements as the faculty member believes are relevant and necessary for the review. Ordinarily, such a dossier includes at least the following: an updated curriculum vitae, the past two or more faculty activity reports, teaching or client assessments, if any, and a description of activities and accomplishments since the last faculty activity report. The faculty member is given a period of no less than four weeks to assemble the dossier for the committee. The dean supplies the review committee with the last two annual evaluations, all materials that were considered in those evaluations, any further materials deemed relevant, and other materials the committee requests. Copies of all materials supplied to the review committee are given to the faculty member. The faculty member has the right to provide a written rebuttal of evidence provided by the dean.

The review committee weighs the faculty member's contributions to the discipline, the University Libraries, and the university through learning, discovery, and engagement. The burden of proving unsatisfactory performance is on the university. The review committee

prepares a summary of its findings and makes a recommendation to the dean and provost. Final action and notification of the faculty member is the responsibility of the dean, with the concurrence of the provost.

The review may result in one of the following outcomes:

Certification of satisfactory performance. The review committee may conclude that the faculty member's competence and professional contributions are satisfactory to meet the minimal expectations of the University Libraries, thus failing to sustain the assessment of the dean. The review is then complete. An unsatisfactory rating in any subsequent year is counted as the first in any future sequence.

Certification of deficiencies. The review committee may concur that the faculty member's competence and/or professional contributions are unsatisfactory to meet the minimal expectations of the University Libraries. The review committee may recommend dismissal for cause, a sanction other than dismissal for cause, or a single period of remediation not to exceed two years.

Remediation. If a period of remediation is recommended, the review committee specifies in detail the deficiencies it noted, defines specific goals and measurable outcomes the faculty member should achieve, and establishes a timeline for meeting the goals. The dean meets with the faculty member at least twice annually to review the individual's progress. The dean prepares a summary report for the review committee following each meeting and at the end of the specified remediation period, at which time the review committee either certifies satisfactory performance or recommends dismissal for cause or a sanction other than dismissal for cause following the procedures described below.

Sanction other than dismissal for cause. A recommendation by the review committee to impose a severe sanction, as defined in chapter four of this handbook "Imposition of a Severe Sanction," is referred to the University-level Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee (university-level committee). The university-level committee reviews the case presented by the review committee. The university-level committee provides an opportunity for the faculty member to be heard and determines whether the recommendation is consistent with the evidence. The university-level committee may reject, uphold, or modify the specific sanction recommended by the review committee. If the library review committee also recommends imposition of a severe sanction, then the same procedures used for dismissal for cause guide the process. The review conducted by the review committee satisfies the requirement in step two for an informal inquiry by an ad hoc or standing personnel committee. Thus, in the case of a post-continued appointment review, this step is not repeated.

If a severe sanction is imposed or ultimately rejected, then the post-continued appointment review cycle is considered complete. An unsatisfactory rating in any subsequent year is counted as the first in any future sequence.

Dismissal for cause. If dismissal for cause is recommended, the case shall be referred to a properly constituted committee within the libraries which reviews the case and determines whether the recommendation is consistent with the evidence. If the University Promotion and Continued Appointment Committee upholds the recommendation for dismissal, then the procedures specified in chapter four of this handbook, “Dismissal for Cause,” begin immediately.

4.9 Imposition of a Severe Sanction or Dismissal for Cause*

*The procedures specified follow closely, but differ in occasional detail from, the "1976 Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure" approved by Committee A of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Sanctions can be sought for a variety of issues as described below; however, should the sanctions be for behaviors falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures (for example, complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment), the sanctioning process will not begin until after any ongoing investigation by the appropriate university office concludes. Any sanction resulting from the process described in this section cannot relitigate the previous case or alter any sanction resulting from that case.

4.9.1 Adequate Cause

Adequate cause for imposition of a ~~severe~~ sanction or dismissal is related, directly and substantially, to the fitness of faculty members in their professional capacity as teachers, ~~and~~ scholars, ~~and university citizens~~. Imposition of a ~~severe~~ sanction or dismissal will not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom or other rights of American citizens.

Adequate cause for a severe sanction or dismissal for cause includes: violation of professional ethics (see chapter two of this handbook, “Professional Responsibilities and Conduct”); incompetence as determined through post-continued appointment review; willful failure to carry out professional obligations or assigned responsibilities; willful violation of university and/or government policies; falsification of information relating to professional qualifications; inability to perform assigned duties satisfactorily because of incarceration; or personal deficiencies that prevent the satisfactory performance of responsibilities ~~(e.g., dependence on drugs or alcohol).~~

Reason to consider the imposition of a severe sanction or dismissal for cause is usually determined by a thorough and careful investigation by an appropriately charged faculty committee (as in the case of allegations of ethical or scholarly misconduct, or through a post-continued appointment review) or by the relevant administrator (for example, the

dean, compliance and conflict resolution officer, internal auditor, or Virginia Tech Police). Generally, these investigations result in a report of findings; some reports also include a recommendation for sanctions. The report is directed to the relevant administrator for action; it is also shared with the faculty member. Imposition of a ~~severe~~ sanction or initiation of dismissal for cause proceedings, if warranted, follows the procedures set forth below.

4.9.2 Imposition of a Severe Sanction

Definition and examples. A severe sanction generally involves a significant loss or penalty to a faculty member such as, but not limited to, a demotion in rank and/or a reduction in salary or suspension without pay for a period not to exceed one year, ~~imposed for unacceptable conduct and/or a serious breach of university policy.~~

Routine personnel actions such as a recommendation for ~~a below average or~~ no merit increase, conversion from a calendar year to an academic year appointment, reassignment, or removal of an administrative stipend do not constitute “sanctions” within the meaning of this policy. A ~~personnel action such as these~~ severe sanction may be a valid issue for grievance under procedures defined in the Faculty Handbook.

Process for Imposing a Severe Sanction. The conduct of a faculty member, although not constituting adequate cause for dismissal, may be sufficiently grave to justify imposition of a severe sanction. Imposition of a severe sanction follows these steps:

Step one. Discussions between the faculty member, the administrator wanting to impose the sanction (typically their department head, chair, or school director), dean, and provost, looking toward a mutual settlement. If a mutual settlement is found, this ends the matter.

Step two. If a mutual settlement is not found, the administrator wanting to impose a sanction contacts the Faculty Review Committee within 10 university business days from the conclusion of step one. An inquiry will be made by a hearing panel comprised of five members of the Faculty Review Committee selected by the Faculty Senate Review Committee chair. The hearing panel reviews the evidence and determines whether there is sufficient cause to impose a severe sanction. The hearing panel evaluates the evidence and makes a recommendation to the provost within 45 university business days from date the Faculty Review Committee was contacted. The requirement for an inquiry is satisfied if the investigation was conducted by another appropriately charged faculty committee (as would be the case with an alleged violation of the ethics or scholarly misconduct policies). If the hearing panel determines that a sanction is not warranted, this ends the matter.

Step three. If the hearing panel determines there is adequate cause for imposing a severe sanction, the hearing panel provides a report of findings to the provost, which shall include a proposed sanction.

Step four. The provost decides on the appropriate sanction, taking into consideration the recommendation(s) of the hearing panel, and informs the faculty member of the sanction in writing. Prior to implementation of the sanction, the faculty member will be afforded a period of not less than 5 university business days to review the proposed sanction and to respond to the provost as to why it should not be imposed. If the provost proceeds with a sanction that is fully consonant with the recommendation(s) of the hearing panel, then this ends the matter.

Step five. If the sanction is more severe than that recommended by the hearing panel, then the faculty member may appeal to the president in writing within 5 university business days. The president's decision is final.

An overview of this process is provided in the table below.

Process Step	Action
Step one	Discussion between faculty member and the administrator wanting to impose the sanction (typically their department head, chair, or school director), dean, and provost. If no mutual settlement reached, move to step two.
Step two	Administrator wanting to impose a sanction contacts the Faculty Review Committee within 10 university business days from the conclusion of step one. Faculty Review Committee selects hearing panel. Faculty Review Committee hearing panel reviews evidence, makes a recommendation to the provost within 45 university business days from date the Faculty Review Committee was contacted. If hearing panel determines sanction is not warranted, matter closed.
Step three	If hearing panel determines sanction is warranted, matter is referred to the provost, which may include proposed sanction.
Step four	Provost decides on the appropriate sanction, taking into consideration the recommendation(s) of the hearing panel, and informs faculty member of sanction in writing. Faculty member has 5 university business days to review proposed sanction and respond to provost.

	<u>If provost proceeds with a sanction that is fully consonant with the recommendation(s) of the hearing panel, then this ends the matter.</u>
<u>Step five</u>	<u>If the sanction is more severe than the hearing panel recommendation, the faculty member may appeal to the president in writing within 5 university business days.</u> <u>The decision of the president is final.</u>

~~the same procedures as dismissal for cause beginning with step one. If the matter is not resolved at the first step, a standing or ad hoc faculty committee conducts an informal inquiry (step two). The requirement for such an informal inquiry is satisfied if the investigation was conducted by an appropriately charged faculty committee (as would be the case with an alleged violation of the ethics or scholarly misconduct policies) and, having determined that in its opinion there is adequate cause for imposing a severe sanction, refers the matter to the administration.~~

4.9.3 Dismissal for Cause

The following procedures apply to faculty members with continued appointment, or for dismissal of a continued appointment-track faculty member before the end of the current appointment.

Dismissal is preceded by:

Step one: Discussions between the faculty member administrator initiating the dismissal for cause, dean, and/or provost, looking toward a mutual settlement. If a mutual settlement is found, this ends the matter.

Step two: If a mutual settlement is not found, the administrator initiating the dismissal for cause will contact the chair of the Faculty Review Committee within 10 university business days from the conclusion of step one. An informal inquiry will be conducted by a hearing panel comprised of five members of the Faculty Review Committee selected by the Faculty Review Committee chairstanding (or, if necessary, ad hoc) faculty committee having concern for personnel matters. This committee attempts to affect an adjustment and, failing to do so, determines whether in its opinion dismissal proceedings should be undertaken, without its opinion being binding on the president's decision whether to proceed.

Step three: The furnishing by the president (in what follows, the president may delegate the provost to serve instead) of a statement of particular-specific charges, in consultation with the dean and provost. The statement of charges is included in a letter to the faculty member indicating the intention to dismiss, with notification of the right to a formal hearing. The faculty member is given a specified reasonable time limit to request a hearing, that time limit is no less than 10 university business days.

Procedures for conducting a formal hearing, if requested: If a hearing committee is to be established, the president asks the Faculty Senate, through its president, to nominate nine faculty members to serve on the hearing committee. These faculty members should be nominated on the basis of their objectivity, competence, and regard in which they are held in the academic community. They must have no bias or untoward interest in the case and are available at the anticipated time of hearing. The faculty member and the president each have a maximum of two challenges from among the nominees without stated cause. The president then names a five-member hearing committee from the remaining names on the nominated slate. The hearing committee elects its chair.

Pending a final decision on the dismissal, the faculty member is suspended only if immediate harm to him or herself or to others is threatened by continuance. If the president believes such suspension is warranted, consultation takes place with the provost and president of the Faculty Senate concerning the propriety, the length, and other conditions of the suspension. Ordinarily, salary continues during such a period of suspension.

The hearing committee may hold joint pre-hearing meetings with both parties to simplify the issues, effect stipulations of facts, provide for the exchange of documentary or other information, and achieve such other appropriate pre-hearing objectives as will make the hearing fair and expeditious.

Notice of hearing of at least 20 university business days is made in writing. The faculty member may waive appearance at the hearing, instead responding to the charges in writing or otherwise denying the charges or asserting that the charges do not support a finding of adequate cause. In such a case, the hearing committee evaluates all available evidence and rests its recommendation on the evidence in the record. [RG6.1]

The hearing committee, in consultation with the president and the faculty member, exercises its judgment as to whether the hearing is public or private. During the proceedings, the faculty member is permitted to have an academic advisor and legal counsel. At the request of either party or on the initiative of the hearing committee, a representative of an appropriate educational association is permitted to attend the hearing as an observer.

A verbatim record of the hearing is taken.

The burden of proof that adequate cause exists rests with the university.

The hearing committee grants adjournment to enable either party to investigate evidence about which a valid claim of surprise is made. The faculty member is afforded an opportunity to obtain necessary witnesses and documentary or other evidence. The administration cooperates with the hearing committee in securing witnesses and

evidence. The faculty member and administration have the right to confront and cross-examine all witnesses. The hearing committee determines the admissibility of statements of unavailable witnesses and, if possible, provides for interrogatories.

The hearing committee is not bound by strict rules of legal evidence and may admit any evidence that is of probative value in determining the issues involved. Every effort is made to obtain the most reliable evidence available.

The findings of fact and the recommendation are based solely on the hearing record. The university president and the faculty member are notified of the recommendation in writing and are given a written copy of the record of the hearing.

If the hearing committee concludes that adequate cause for dismissal has not been established, it so reports to the university president. In such a case, the hearing committee may recommend sanctions short of outright dismissal or may recommend no sanctions. If the university president rejects the recommendation, the hearing committee and the faculty member are so informed in writing, with reasons, and each is given an opportunity for response.

Appeal to the Board of Visitors. If the university president decides to impose dismissal or other severe sanction, whether that is the recommendation of the hearing committee, the faculty member may request that the full record of the case be submitted to the Board of Visitors (or a duly constituted committee of the board). The board's review is based on the record of the committee hearing, and it provides opportunity for argument, written or oral or both, by the principals at the hearing or their representatives. If the recommendation of the hearing committee is not sustained, the proceeding returns to the hearing committee with specific objections. The hearing committee then reconsiders, taking into account the stated objections and receiving new evidence if necessary. The board makes a final decision only after studying the hearing committee's reconsideration.

Notice of Dismissal. In cases where gross misconduct is decided, dismissal is usually immediate. The standard for gross misconduct is behavior so egregious that it evokes condemnation by the academic community generally and is so utterly blameworthy as to make it inappropriate to offer additional notice or severance pay. The first faculty committee that considers the case determines gross misconduct. In cases not involving gross misconduct: (a) a faculty member with continued appointment receives up to one year of salary or notice, and (b) a probationary faculty member receives up to three months' salary or notice. These terms of dismissal begin at the date of final notification of dismissal.

4.10 Faculty Grievance Policy and Procedures

The following procedure is provided as the means for resolution of grievances against a supervisor or member(s) of the university administration brought by members of the

University Libraries faculty with continued appointment or on the continued appointment-track. The [Faculty Review Committee](#) conducts the step four hearing if requested.

4.10.1 Ombuds, Mediation Services, and Faculty Reconciliation

Informal Dialogue: It should be possible to resolve most faculty concerns or complaints through informal communication among colleagues working together in the academic enterprise. Accordingly, a faculty member who feels he or she has a grievance is encouraged to take it to the immediate supervisor in the collegial spirit of problem solving rather than as a confrontation between adversaries.

University Ombuds: Any university community member may visit the [Virginia Tech Office of Interactive Communication and Empowerment \(VOICE\)](#). The Ombuds listen and explore options for addressing and resolving concerns or complaints. The Ombuds Office (“the Office”) has no authority to make or reverse any decisions or actions taken by university authorities. It supplements, but does not replace, the university's conflict resolution resources and systems of review and adjudication.

Communications with the Ombuds Office are considered confidential. The Office will not accept legal notice on behalf of the university, and information provided to it does not constitute such notice. However, if someone wishes to make the university formally aware of a particular problem, the Office can provide instructions on how to do so. The only exception to this pledge of confidentiality is when the Office determines that there is an imminent risk of serious harm, or if disclosure is required by law.

To preserve independence and neutrality, the Ombuds Office reports directly to the president. The Office does not keep permanent records of confidential communications.

Faculty Reconciliation. At the initiation of the grievance procedure, or at any earlier time, the grievant may request the assistance of the director of faculty reconciliation (DFR) in fashioning an equitable solution. Contacting the DFR is not required in filing a grievance, but it may be useful if the grievant feels that the issue may be amenable to, but will require time for, negotiation; or if the grievant is unsure whether the concern is a legitimate issue for a grievance; or if personal relations between the parties involved in the grievance have become strained.

For a potential grievance issue to qualify for consideration, the grievant must contact the DFR within 30 calendar days of the time when the grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is the basis for the potential grievance, just as if beginning the grievance process. If the grievant requests assistance from the DFR, they request a postponement of the time limits involved in the formal grievance procedure while they deal with the case. The request is submitted in writing to the vice provost for faculty affairs and the vice president of the faculty senate by the DFR. In addition, the grievant should

reach an understanding with the DFR of the time frame planned for working on the case, with such time not to exceed 60 calendar days.

Faculty members may also consult the DFR about serious disagreements with colleagues, immediate supervisors or other university administrators concerning issues that may not be eligible for consideration within the grievance process. In such instances, the DFR contacts the relevant administrator to determine if there is an interest and willingness to explore informal resolution of the dispute; it is not necessary to notify the Office of the Provost. For more information, consult [Faculty Reconciliation](#).

Mediation and Other Conflict Resolution Services: The [Office for Civil Rights Compliance and Prevention Education](#) (OCRCPE) offers a range of conflict resolution services, including conflict coaching, mediation, and group facilitations. In general, OCRCPE's conflict resolution services are available in matters related to the office's work to maintain working environments free from discrimination.

Mediation is a voluntary process through which one or more trained facilitators assist employees in expressing their concerns and developing solutions to a conflict in a structured environment. Mediation differs from faculty reconciliation in that mediation facilitators do not conduct fact-finding or evaluate decisions. Mediation may be available prior to or after filing a grievance. Any party to a grievance process may request mediation prior to step three of the process. If both parties voluntarily agree to try mediation and the university, usually through the OCRCPE, appoints a facilitator, then the grievance is placed on administrative hold until the mediation process is complete. If a resolution is reached through mediation, then the parties are responsible to each other for ensuring that the provisions of the resolution agreement are followed. If any party withdraws from mediation or the facilitator terminates the process without agreement, then the grievant may request that the grievance be reactivated and the process continues.

4.10.2 The Formal Grievance Procedure

For this process, a grievance is defined as a complaint by a faculty member alleging a violation, misinterpretation, or incorrect application of a policy, procedure, or practice of the university that directly affects the grievant. Some examples of valid issues for filing a grievance are: improperly or unfairly determined personnel decisions that result in an unsatisfactory annual performance evaluation; unreasonable merit adjustment or salary level; excessive teaching load/work assignments; substantive violations of promotion and tenure procedures including the appeal process (see appeal process in chapter four of this handbook, "Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued-Appointment, or Promotion"); reprisals; substantive error in the application of policy; and matters relating to academic freedom.

Issues not open to grievance. While most faculty disputes with the university administration may be dealt with by this grievance policy, the following issues may not be

made the subject of a grievance: determination of policy appropriately promulgated by the university administration or the university governance system; those items falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures (for example, complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment, appeals of non-reappointment, promotion and/or tenure decisions); the contents of personnel and other policies, procedures, rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes; the routine assignment of university resources (e.g., space, operating funds, parking, etc.); usual actions taken, or recommendations made, by administrators or committee members acting in an official capacity in the grievance process; termination of appointment by removal for just cause, non-reappointment, or abolition of position; or allegations of misconduct in scholarly activities.

If the assistance of the DFR is not desired or is not requested; or if the DFR determines that they cannot provide assistance in the matter; or if the grievant finds that the length of time the DFR plans or takes with the case is excessive; or if the grievant is not satisfied with the recommendations of the DFR, the grievant may pursue the issue as a formal grievance through the following procedure. Department heads, chairs, or school directors, deans, directors, and other administrative faculty will cooperate with the grievant in the mechanics of processing the grievance, but the grievant alone is responsible for preparation of the case. For more information, consult the [Tenured, Tenure-Track, Continued Appointment, Continued Appointment-Track, and Non-Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty Grievance Form](#).

Step one. The grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor within 30 calendar days of the date that grievant knew or should have known of the event or action that is basis for the grievance and orally identifies the grievance and the grievant's concerns. The supervisor provides an oral response to the grievant within five-10 university business days weekdays following the meeting. If the supervisor's response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

Step two. If a satisfactory resolution of the grievance is not achieved by the immediate supervisor's oral response, the grievant may submit a written statement of the grievance and the relief requested to the immediate supervisor, the vice provost for faculty affairs, and the director of faculty reconciliation within 10 university business days of receiving the oral response from the immediate supervisor. This statement must be on the faculty grievance form, must define the grievance and the relief requested specifically and precisely, and must be submitted to the immediate supervisor within five weekdays of the time when the grievant received the immediate supervisor's oral response to the first step meeting. Faculty grievance forms are available at [Faculty Forms](#). Once submitted, the written statement of the grievance and the relief requested may not be modified.

Within five weekdays of receiving the written statement of the grievance, theThe immediate supervisor notifies the person or persons against whom the grievance is being

mad and provides a written response, ~~in turn, gives the grievant a written response~~ on the faculty grievance form, citing reasons for action taken or not taken, within 10 university business days after receiving the form. The grievant and the immediate supervisor will then meet with the director of faculty reconciliation to discuss the grievant's concerns and explore possible solutions. ~~f a solution that is satisfactory to all parties involved is reached~~If the written response of the immediate supervisor is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.

Step three. If a satisfactory resolution of the grievance is not achieved through reconciliation, the grievance form and the immediate supervisor's written response are then submitted within five university business days to Faculty Affairs which will then forward it to the Faculty Senate Grievability Committee consisting of the director of faculty reconciliation, chair of the Faculty Review Committee, and a representative appointed by the Faculty Senate president. The Grievability Committee considers the matter (including consultations with both parties if deemed necessary) and rules by majority vote if the matter is eligible for further consideration within the grievance process. The Grievability Committee sends a written report of the results of the deliberations to all parties concerned within 10 university business days. If the matter is deemed ineligible for the grievance process, that ends the matter. If the matter is deemed eligible for the grievance process, the Faculty Review Committee via the committee chair will then provide feedback to all parties concerning the relative merits of the case

Step four. If the matter is deemed eligible for consideration within the grievance process and the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response by the immediate supervisor is not acceptable to the grievant, the grievant may advance the grievance to the next level of university administration by checking the appropriate place on the faculty grievance form, signing and sending the form to the next level administrator via the vice provost for faculty affairs within ~~five-10 university business days~~weekdays of receiving the ~~written response from the immediate supervisor~~Grievability Committee's decision. The next level of administration for faculty in the University Libraries is usually the University Libraries dean. The administrator involved at this next level is hereafter referred to as the second-level administrator.

Following receipt of the faculty grievance form, the second-level administrator or designated representative meets with the grievant within 10 university business days~~five weekdays~~. The second-level administrator may request the immediate supervisor of the grievant be present; the grievant may similarly request that a chosen representative from among the university faculty be present. Unless the grievant is represented by a member of the faculty who is also a lawyer, the second-level administrator does not have legal counsel present. The second-level administrator gives the grievant a written decision on the faculty grievance form within 10 university business days~~five weekdays~~ after the

meeting, citing reasons for the decision. If the second-level administrator's written response to the grievance is satisfactory to the grievant it ends the matter.

Step ~~four~~five. If the resolution of the grievance proposed in the written response from the second-level administrator is not acceptable, the grievant may advance the grievance within 10 university business days~~five weekdays~~ to the level of the provost via the vice provost for faculty affairs, including consideration by an impartial hearing panel of the Faculty Review Committee of the Faculty Senate. Information about the Faculty Review Committee is in chapter two of this handbook and at [Faculty Senate](#).

Upon receiving the faculty grievance form requesting step ~~four~~five review, the provost, or appropriate designated representative, acknowledges receipt of the grievance within 10 university business days~~five weekdays and forwards a copy of the "Procedures of the Faculty Review Committee"~~.

The provost immediately forwards a copy of the grievance to the president of the Faculty Senate, who also writes to the grievant to acknowledge receipt of the grievance within 10 university business days~~five weekdays~~ of receipt of the faculty grievance form from the provost. The Faculty Senate president also forwards a copy of the "Evidential and Hearing Procedures of the Faculty Review Committee" to parties in the grievance process.

The grievant may petition the provost to bypass the Faculty Review Committee and rule on the grievance. If the provost accepts the request, there is no subsequent opportunity for the grievance to be heard by a hearing panel. The provost's decision, however, may be appealed to the university president, as described in step ~~five~~six. If the provost does not accept the petition, the Faculty Review Committee hears the grievance as outlined in these procedures.

The Faculty Review Committee does not normally consider the subject of a grievance while it is simultaneously under review by another committee or panel of the university.

Evidential Review Committee and Recommendation Panel~~Hearing Panel.~~ An Evidential Review Committee and Recommendation Panel, hereafter the evidential panel~~hearing panel~~ consists of five faculty members appointed by the chair of the Faculty ~~Senate~~ Review Committee from among the members of the Faculty Review Committee. The chair of the Faculty Review Committee polls all appointees to ensure that they have no conflict of interest in the case. Both parties to the grievance may challenge one of the appointments, if they so desire, without need to state cause, and the chair of the Faculty ~~Senate~~ Review Committee appoints the needed replacement or replacements. Other replacements are made only for cause. The chair of the Faculty ~~Senate~~ Review Committee rules on issues of cause.

To ensure uniformity in practice, the chair of the Faculty Review Committee or their designee serves as the non-voting chair of each hearing-evidential panel. ~~In the event~~

~~that~~ the chair of the Faculty Review Committee has a conflict of interest concerning a case, the chair appoints a disinterested third party from among the members of the Faculty ~~Senate~~-Review Committee not already appointed to the hearing-evidential panel for the case to serve as chair ~~of the hearing panel~~.

HearingsEvidential Meeting. After an hearing-evidential panel is appointed, the chair of the Faculty Review Committee requests that each party to the grievance provide relevant documentation to be shared among the parties and the hearing-evidential panel. Materials submitted by either party that do not conform to the evidential requirements specified in the “Evidential and Hearing Procedures of the Faculty Review Committee” as determined by the chair of the Faculty Review Committee may be disregarded. The panel holds its initial meeting to decide if they need to have additional information from one or both parties. The decision to not have a hearing is reviewable by the president of the Faculty Senate.

Hearing. If the panel decides additional information would be helpful, the panel may hold a hearing with both ~~principals-parties~~ present within 15 ~~weekdays-university business days~~ of receipt of the grievance by the Faculty Senate president. If the panel feels it needs to investigate the case further, or requires more information, or desires to hear witnesses, the hearing is adjourned until the panel completes the necessary work or scheduling. The hearing is then reconvened as appropriate.

Each party to the grievance may have a representative present during the sessions of the hearing at which testimony is presented. The representative may speak on their behalf if so requested. Representatives may be legal counsel, if both parties are so represented, but if the grievant does not wish to have legal counsel at a hearing, neither party to the grievance may have legal counsel present.

These impartial panel hearings are administrative functions, not adversarial proceedings. Therefore, if legal counsel ~~s are is~~ present, they must understand that the proceedings do not follow courtroom or trial procedures and rules. Participation by legal counsel is at the invitation of the parties they represent and is subject to the rulings of the chair of the hearing-evidential panel. Detailed procedures followed in hearings are specified in the “Procedures of the Faculty Review Committee” as approved by the Faculty Senate.

Findings and Recommendations. The hearing-evidential panel concludes its work and makes its recommendations within 45 weekdays of receipt of the grievance by the Faculty Senate president. The time limit for consideration may be extended by agreement of both parties.

The hearing-evidential panel formulates written findings and recommendations regarding disposition of the grievance and forwards copies to the provost, the grievant, and the chair of the Faculty Review Committee.

Provost's Action. The provost meets with the grievant within 10 ~~weekdays-university business days~~ after receiving the findings and recommendations of the ~~hearing-evidential~~ panel to discuss the case and advise the grievant about the prospects for disposition of the case. Within 10 ~~weekdays-university business days~~ of that meeting, the provost sends to the grievant, ~~the party or parties being grieved, and the first and second level supervisors~~ –the decision in writing concerning the disposition of the grievance. If the provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendations of the hearing panel, that ends the matter.

Step ~~five~~six. If the provost's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendations of the hearing panel, the grievant may appeal in writing to the university president within 20 ~~calendar-university business days~~~~days~~. ~~The president acts as he or she sees fit.~~ The president's decision is final.

4.10.3 Timeliness of Grievance and Procedural Compliance

A grievance must be brought forward in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of the grievant to initiate the grievance process within 30 calendar days of the time when ~~he or she knew or should have known of~~ the event or action should have been known and that is the basis for the grievance. The university administration is not required to accept a grievance for processing if the grievant does not meet the 30-day deadline, except in cases of demonstrated good cause.

Scheduled commitments made prior to the time of filing or advancement of a grievance that preclude action by either of the parties to the grievance automatically extend time limits for their duration unless this would be demonstrably harmful to the fair processing of the grievance. In such cases, on written request by the grievant to the appropriate office for that step, the grievance is advanced to the next step in the grievance process.

If the grievant does not follow the time limits specified in the grievance procedure it is assumed that ~~he or she accepted~~ the last proposed resolution was accepted as satisfactory. If the grievant desires to advance the grievance after the appropriate specified time limits have lapsed, the administrator who receives the late submission notifies the chair of the Faculty Review Committee in writing, and the chair of the Faculty Review Committee determines if there was good cause for the delay. If so, the grievance proceeds. If not, the process ends with the ~~most recently~~enforcement of the most recently proposed resolution ~~in force~~. The finding on the matter by the chair of the Faculty Review Committee is communicated to both parties in writing.

If either party to a grievance charges the other with procedural violations other than time limit issues, a special committee of the president of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Faculty Senate Committee on Ethics, director of faculty reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Review Committee (or the vice president of the senate if the president is also

chair of the Faculty Review Committee) is convened to rule on the question, as in disputes about the validity of issues qualifying for the grievance procedure. The special committee has the following options. It can either find no significant procedural violation occurred, in which case the grievance process continues unaffected, or that a significant procedural violation did occur. If the administrator committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance automatically qualifies for advancement to the next step in the grievance process. If the grievant committed a significant procedural violation, the grievance process ends at that point with the last proposed resolution established as the final disposition of the case.

4.10.4 Valid Issues for Grievance

~~For this process, a grievance is defined as a complaint by a faculty member alleging a violation, misinterpretation, or incorrect application of a policy, procedure, or practice of the university that directly affects the grievant. Some examples of valid issues for filing a grievance are: improperly or unfairly determined personnel decisions that result in an unsatisfactory annual performance evaluation, unreasonable merit adjustment or salary level, or excessive teaching load/work assignments; substantive violations of promotion and continued appointment procedures (see appeal process in chapter four of this handbook, “Appeals of Decisions on Reappointment, Continued Appointment, or Promotion”); reprisals; substantive error in the application of policy; and matters relating to academic freedom.~~

~~**Issues not open to grievance.** While most faculty disputes with the university administration may be dealt with by this grievance policy, the following issues may not be made the subject of a grievance: determination of policy appropriately promulgated by the university administration or the university governance system; those items falling within the jurisdiction of other university policies and procedures (for example, complaints of unlawful discrimination or harassment, appeals of non-reappointment, promotion and/or tenure/continued appointment decisions); the contents of personnel and other policies, procedures, rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes; the routine assignment of university resources (e.g., space, operating funds, parking, etc.); usual actions taken, or recommendations made, by administrators or committee members acting in an official capacity in the grievance process; termination of appointment by removal for just cause, non-reappointment, or abolition of position; or allegations of misconduct in scholarly activities.~~

~~**Adjudication of disputes on the validity of issues qualifying for consideration under the faculty grievance procedures.** If a university administrator rules that an issue does not qualify for the grievance process, the grievant may write to the chair of the Faculty Review Committee within five weekdays of receiving such notification and request a ruling from a special committee consisting of the president of the Faculty Senate, the director of faculty reconciliation, and the chair of the Faculty Review Committee. The~~

~~special committee considers the matter (including consultations with both parties if deemed necessary) and rules by majority vote on the admissibility of the matter to the grievance process. This special committee is called together by the chair of the Faculty Review Committee, who also sends a written report of the results of the deliberations of the committee to all parties concerned.~~

4.10.5 Particular Concerns and Definitions

Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion make such an agreement. Visit [Faculty Forms](#) for the [“Agreement to Extend the Deadline for Grievance Response”](#) form.

Grievances that advance to step four during or close to the summer and/or teaching breaks during the academic year may require some extension of the stipulated time limits. The principals and the chair of the Faculty Review Committee negotiate such an extension. Every effort is made, however, to stay within the stipulated time limits. In case of disagreement, the Faculty Senate president rules on time extension and procedure questions, which might include a hearing conducted by three rather than five panel members, or other recommendations designed to expedite the proceedings while providing peer review of the grievance.

If a faculty member is away from the assigned work location at the time ~~of discovery~~ the event or action ~~is discovered and~~ is the basis for a grievance, the 30-day period during which the grievant must meet with the immediate supervisor to initiate the grievance process begins when the faculty member returns to the assigned work location. If the date of return causes a delay of such length that the grievance, or its resolution, is not timely, the grievant may submit the grievance in writing to the immediate supervisor ~~(step two)~~, omitting personal meetings until such time as the faculty member returns to the assigned work location.

~~“University Business DaysWeekdays,”~~ as used in this procedure, include Monday through Friday only and only when those days are not national, state, or religious holidays relevant to the principals in the grievance, ~~and when the university is not closed due to inclement weather.~~

To protect a grievant from undue pressure in the pursuit of a grievance, if a grievant becomes ill and takes sick leave the grievance process stops until such time as the grievant can resume duties. Exceptions to this provision are made at the request of the grievant, but only if the grievant obtains and produces medical certification that proceeding with the grievance will not be harmful to the health of the grievant or exacerbate the ailment that required taking sick leave.

All costs of legal counsel employed by a grievant are borne by the grievant.

If a grievant is employed away from Blacksburg and is required to travel away from their duty station in resolution of their grievance, the university pays all travel costs permitted under state regulations.

In the event that a faculty member discovers ~~he or she has~~ there is a grievance about actions by an administrator above the level of the immediate supervisor that directly involve the faculty member, or with actions by an administrator not in the department or unit that directly involve the faculty member, the grievant initiates the grievance process by seeking the intervention of the immediate supervisor within 30 calendar days of the discovery of the event or action that is the basis for the grievance. If that effort does not resolve the grievance satisfactorily, the grievant, after consulting the immediate supervisor, may file the faculty grievance form at the appropriate level or with the appropriate administrative office to initiate response from the administrator perceived as the source of the action causing the grievance. The grievance process then proceeds from that level onward in the usual fashion.

A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the provost is ~~managed handled~~ by the chair of the Faculty Review Committee and a impartial hearing panel, but the findings and recommendations of the hearing panel are sent to the university president for ruling, rather than to the provost. A grievance filed by a faculty member concerning an action of the ~~university~~ president of the university is ~~addressed-dealt with~~ by a special panel appointed by the provost in consultation with the president of the Faculty Senate.

Any final resolution of a grievance must be consonant with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and university policy.

Once a grievance is resolved, either to the satisfaction of the grievant, or if not to the satisfaction of the grievant, by the action of the provost in consonance with the ~~hearing~~ evidential panel recommendations, or by the ruling of the president, that specific grievance is closed and may not be made the subject of another grievance.

4.10.6 Overview of the Formal Grievance Process for Faculty with Continued Appointment or on the Continued Appointment-Track

Below is an abbreviated overview of the grievance process and deadlines. Refer to chapter four of this handbook “The Formal Grievance Procedure,” ~~for specific details and options available in each step of the grievance process.~~

~~Time limits are subject to extension by written agreement of both parties. The grievant and the administrator involved at that step of the discussion are the makers of such an agreement. Visit Faculty Forms for the “Agreement to Extend the Deadline for Grievance Response” form.~~

Step One

Timing	Step Number and Description
Within 30 days of event	1a. Grievant meets with immediate supervisor.
Within 5 weekdays10 university business days of 1a.	1b. Supervisor provides ~~verbal~~ oral response. 1c. If ~~the~~ supervisor's response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter. 1d. If supervisor's response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step two within 5-10 university business weekdays.

Step Two

Timing	Step Number and Description
Within 5 weekdays10 university business days of 1d.	2a. Grievant submits written grievance to ~~immediate~~ supervisor, vice provost for faculty affairs, and director of faculty reconciliation.
Within 5 weekdays of 2a.	~~2b.~~ Supervisor notifies person(s) against whom the grievance is being made, and provides written response on grievance formSupervisor responds in writing on grievance form. ~~2b.~~ 2c. Supervisor and grievant meet with director of faculty reconciliation. 2b. If ~~the supervisor's response is satisfactory to the grievant~~ solution is found that is satisfactory to all parties, that ends the matter. 2c. If ~~the supervisor's response is not satisfactory~~ solution not found, to the grievant, move to step three within 5 weekdays.

Step Three

Timing	Step Number and Description
Within 5 university business days of 2d.weekdays	3a. Grievant submits grievance form and written response to Faculty Affairs. Grievant advances grievance form to the second-level administrator (usually dean of University Libraries).

	3b. <u>Grievability Committee considers matter, makes ruling, sends written report to all parties within 10 university business days.</u> 3c. <u>If matter deemed ineligible for grievance, that ends the matter.</u> 3a.3d. <u>If matter deemed eligible for grievance, grievant may advance grievance to step four within 10 university business days.</u>
Within 5 weekdays	3a. <u>Dean meets with grievant; dean may request department to be present.</u>
Within 5 weekdays	3b. <u>Dean responds in writing on grievance form.</u> 3c. <u>If the dean's written response is satisfactory to the grievant, that ends the matter.</u> 3d. <u>If the dean's written response is not satisfactory to the grievant, move to step four within 5 weekdays.</u>

Step Four

Timing	Step Number and Description
Within 5 weekdays 10 university business days of 3e.	4a. <u>Grievant checks appropriate box on grievance form and submits to second-level administrator via vice provost for faculty affairs. Grievant advances grievance form to the provost.</u>
Within 10 university business days5 weekdays of 4a.	4b. <u>Second-level administrator meets with grievant. Provost acknowledges receipt of grievance and forwards copy to Faculty Senate president to receive recommendation of an impartial hearing panel of the Faculty Review Committee.</u>
Within 10 university business days5 weekdays of 4b.	4c. <u>Second-level administrator gives grievant a written decision on faculty grievance form.</u> 4d. <u>If second-level administrator's written response is satisfactory to grievant, that ends the matter.</u> 4e. <u>If second-level administrator's written response is not satisfactory to grievant, move to step five. Faculty Senate president acknowledges in writing to grievant that copy of grievance has been received from provost.</u>

Within 15 weekdays	4d. Faculty Review Committee chair appoints hearing panel from among Faculty Review Committee members; panel holds its initial meeting with both principals.
Within 45 weekdays	4e. The hearing panel concludes its work and makes recommendations to the provost and the grievant.
Within 10 weekdays	4f. Provost meets with grievant.
Within 10 weekdays	4g. The provost notifies the grievant in writing of the decision.
	4h. If the provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) the recommendations of the hearing panel, or if it is satisfactory to the grievant even if it differs from the recommendation of the hearing panel that ends the matter.
	4i. If the provost's decision is not acceptable to the grievant and not consonant with the recommendation of the hearing panel, move to step five within 20 calendar days.

Step Five

Timing	Description
<u>Within 10 university business days of 4e. Within 20 calendar days</u>	5a. <u>Grievant advances grievance to the provost via vice provost for faculty affairs. Grievant appeals in writing to university president.</u> 5b.5a. <u>The university president's decision is final.</u>
<u>Within 10 university business days of 5a.</u>	5b. <u>Provost, or designee, acknowledges receipt of grievance.</u> 5c. <u>Provost immediately forwards copy of grievance to president of Faculty Senate, who also acknowledges receipt.</u> 5d. <u>President of Faculty Senate forwards copy of "Evidential and Hearing Procedures of the Faculty Review Committee" to all parties.</u> 5e. <u>Grievant may petition provost to bypass Faculty Review Committee and rule on grievance.</u> 5f. <u>If petition accepted, there is no further opportunity for grievance to be heard by panel; provost's decision can be appealed to president as described in step six.</u>

	5g. If petition is not requested, or not accepted, an evidential panel of the Faculty Review Committee hears the grievance.
<u>Within 45 university business days of 5g.</u>	5h. Evidential panel concludes its work and makes recommendations.
<u>Within 10 university business days of 5i.</u>	5i. Provost sends decision in writing to grievant, party(ies) being grieved, and first and second-level supervisors.
	5j. If provost's decision is fully consonant with (or exceeds) recommendations of panel, that ends the matter.
	5k. If provost's decision is not acceptable to grievant and not consonant with recommendations of panel, grievant may appeal.
<u>Step Six</u>	
<u>Timing</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>Within 20 university business days of 5l.</u>	5l. Grievant appeals in writing to the president.
	5m. The president's decision is final.

[RG7.1]

4.11 Voluntary Transitional Retirement Program (VTRP)

[Policy 4410, "Voluntary Transitional Retirement Program for Tenured Faculty"](#) outlines a program to assist the university's tenured and continued appointment faculty in their transition from full-time active service to retirement and, in some cases, to facilitate their subsequent part-time re-employment to address staffing needs or to support research efforts. Consult "Retirement Transition" at [Work-Life Resources](#).