



Policy Number: IV.05
Policy Level: Operating Policy
Originally Issued: May 6, 2013
Revised: May 23, 2014
Revised: September 6, 2016
Revised: February 20, 2017
Reviewed: April 1, 2020
Revised: February 13, 2023
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Policy Owner: President
Policy Implementation: Provost/VP of Academic Affairs and Student Services
SACSCOC Standard: 6.4

Continuation of Appointments (Tenure)

I. Policy Statement and Purpose

This policy establishes the standards used for tenure of faculty members at Athens State University. An award of tenure, or continuing contract status, is not a right but a privilege which must be earned by a faculty member. The granting of tenure is never automatic, and is based on the expectation that the consistently high professional competence required to achieve tenure will continue once tenure is awarded. Tenure is a long-term commitment by the University, aimed at assuring academic freedom: the freedom to teach, inquire, create, debate, and dissent without fear of penalty. These activities and freedom are crucial to the mission and goals of the University and the advancement of knowledge.

If a faculty member meets the eligibility requirements for tenure, tenure may be granted only after the faculty member has been evaluated by the process outlined in the [University Tenure and Promotion Committee Practices, Expectations and Procedures](#). This policy only applies to faculty members hired on or after October 1, 2012.

II. Probationary Period

It is the policy of Athens State University that a faculty member will complete a probationary period of five (5) successive academic years at the University, and submit the application for tenure consideration at the beginning of the sixth (6th) year. However, up to three year's prior fulltime service at the rank of instructor or above may be credited toward the probationary requirement. Any agreement to credit prior service must be stated in writing at the time of appointment. Whether and how much service to credit will depend on such factors as academic rank, prior tenure status, quality of prior service, and relevance of prior service to the requirements of the new position at Athens State University. Following the tenure review process in the year of eligibility, a faculty member will be granted tenure upon acceptance of an offer of appointment from the President for the next academic year.

A faculty member holding the academic rank of assistant professor, assistant librarian, associate professor, associate librarian, professor or senior librarian may, at the discretion of the university administration, be granted leave from the tenure time-line (stopping the tenure clock) without breaking the successive years of employment for tenure purposes, but years of leave will not count as years of service toward tenure unless specifically granted in writing at the time leave is granted.



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II. Tenure Eligibility

Tenure may be awarded to individuals appointed to the faculty on tenure-track appointments. Eligibility for tenure consideration is limited to faculty appointments of 50 percent or greater. Tenure may not be awarded to non-tenure-earning faculty.

Administrative appointments do not carry tenure, but an administrator who holds a tenured academic appointment, and an administrator who holds a tenure-earning appointment on the faculty may be awarded tenure in accordance with procedures and criteria of Athens State University and the appropriate department, college, or library.

IV. Mid-Tenure Review Procedures

Tenure-track faculty shall complete a formal mid-tenure review at the mid-point of the Athens State University tenure-track designed to evaluate their progress toward tenure which will result in written recommendations. By the second week of class during the fall semester the Human Resources Office shall provide a list of eligible tenure-track faculty to the Provost/Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Student Services and all Department Chairs, College Deans and Library Director. The Department chair or Library Director shall be responsible for initiating the mid-tenure review, notifying the applicant during the fall semester that his or her review shall take place during the spring semester immediately following. (If the Department chair is the faculty member being reviewed, the College Dean shall be responsible for implementing the procedures in this document.) Please refer to the [University Tenure and Promotion Committee Practices, Expectations and Procedures](#).

V. Tenure Review

Please refer to the [University Tenure and Promotion Committee Practices, Expectations and Procedures](#) for detailed information regarding the procedures that are to be used for the tenure review in the year of eligibility.



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VI. Responsibility for this Operating Policy

Policy Owner

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the President remains the policy owner for the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Faculty Senate and the Cabinet and approved by the University President. This policy will be updated/published in the University's Policy Library.

Responsibility for Policy Implementation

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services.