

Commission on Faculty Affairs

RESOLUTION TO REVISE FACULTY HANDBOOK SECTION ON INSTRUCTOR RANKS

CFA 2025-26E

Resolution Proposal Form Sent to University Council Cabinet	August 28, 2025
First Reading by Commission on Faculty Affairs	October 31, 2025
Approval by Commission on Faculty Affairs	November 14, 2025
First Reading by Faculty Senate	November 7, 2025
Approval by Faculty Senate	November 21, 2025
Staff Senate Comment	October 29, 2025
Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Comment	November 12, 2025
Graduate and Professional Student Senate Waived Right to Comment	November 21, 2025
Undergraduate Student Senate Waived Right to Comment	November 21, 2025
First Reading, University Council	February 2, 2026
Approved, University Council	February 16, 2026
Approved, President	February 17, 2026
Approved, Board of Visitors	Date
Effective Date	Upon Approval

WHEREAS, the current Faculty Handbook includes a time-in-rank requirement for instructors seeking promotion; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech promotes faculty based on demonstrated accomplishments, competence, and merit, rather than on the mere passage of time; and

WHEREAS, no other faculty rank or series within the university's promotion system requires a minimum period of time in rank prior to eligibility for advancement; and

WHEREAS, maintaining a time-in-rank requirement for instructors creates an inconsistency across faculty ranks and may inadvertently delay advancement for individuals who have already met the university's standards for excellence; and

WHEREAS, removing the time-in-rank requirement will align promotion policies across all faculty series, promote fairness and consistency, and better recognize instructors for their achievements and contributions when they are ready for advancement; and

WHEREAS, this change supports Virginia Tech's commitment to fostering faculty success, professional growth, and institutional excellence;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Handbook, section 5.1.6, be revised as shown below with changes noted in **red**.

5.1.6 Instructor Ranks

Instructors are focused on undergraduate education with minimal or no expectation for development of an independent program of research or scholarship. A master's degree is the usual minimum educational credential for an appointment to the instructor ranks, and generally a minimum of 18 graduate credits teaching in the discipline is required to meet accreditation standards. Instructors with distinctive assignments and work schedules will have these responsibilities conveyed in the Terms of Faculty Offer (TOFO) letter at the time of appointment.

While initial appointment is typically at the entry rank, prior experience may be considered for a recommendation of appointment at a higher rank with the approval of the appropriate departmental or school committee and head, chair, or school director. ~~Up to three years of similar instructional service at another accredited American four-year college or university may be counted toward the designated period required prior to consideration of review for promotion in rank.~~

Service at these ranks is excluded from the pre-tenure probationary period if the faculty member is subsequently appointed to a tenure-track position. Faculty members within the instructor ranks may not chair a graduate committee.

Instructor. The instructor rank is the initial rank for appointment of a full or part-time faculty member. Primary responsibilities are usually to the instructional program, but assignments vary depending on the faculty member's expertise and experience and departmental or school needs. Typically, they include teaching undergraduate courses, advising students, developing, or revising courses and curricula, and fulfilling other instructional, administrative, or service responsibilities. Appointment at this rank consists of a series of one- or two-year renewable appointments ~~with a minimum of five years of completed service before consideration for promotion.~~

Advanced Instructor. Consideration for promotion to the rank of advanced instructor may be requested by the instructor or recommended by the department or school based on excellence in instructional responsibilities and significant evidence of related professional growth and development. Mentoring colleagues or graduate teaching assistants, student advising, course or curriculum development, or exemplary service or outreach are examples of ways in which instructors can make valuable contributions to the instructional programs in a department or school. Advanced instructors are expected to demonstrate mastery in teaching with significant impact on student learning and the department or school's undergraduate programs. Scholarship and publication are not typically an assigned responsibility of instructor positions, but such accomplishments may be considered as part of the evaluation for promotion. Promotion to the advanced instructor rank is generally accompanied by a renewable three-year contract.

~~A minimum of five years of completed service at the advanced instructor rank is required before consideration for promotion to senior instructor.~~

Senior Instructor. Senior instructor is the capstone rank in the instructor series and promotion to this rank denotes exemplary instruction, demonstrated continued professional development, and significant contributions to undergraduate education. In addition to teaching courses, senior instructors may have considerable responsibility in mentoring colleagues or graduate teaching assistants, overseeing course development or special instructional initiatives, student advising, or other responsibilities reflecting their role as instructional leaders. Promotion to the rank of senior instructor is generally accompanied by a renewable five-year contract.



AP Faculty Senate Comments

Comments on CFA 2025-26E – Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook for Instructor Rank

November 12, 2025

The AP Faculty Senate Policies and Issues Committee has reviewed and approves/endorses the CFA 2025-26E – Resolution to Revise the Faculty Handbook for Instructor Rank.



Staff Senate Comments

CFA 2025-26E

October 29th, 2025

Staff Senate had no questions or concerns with this resolution. The only comment was that it seems reasonable that an instructor could be promoted without spending 5 years in that role. The time limitation seemed arbitrary as it was.

Staff Senate has no other comments.

Thank you,

Gabe Petry, Chair, Staff Senate Policies and Issues Committee