

College of Science (COS) Guidelines for Instructor Promotions **(all updates for 2024-25 are highlighted)**

Promotion to a higher rank is granted to instructors who have demonstrated excellence in instructional responsibilities and show significant evidence of related professional growth and development. Faculty members may be in a *regular* or a *restricted* appointment to be considered for promotion. Terms of service required for promotion are detailed on the Provost's web pages at

www.provost.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/promotion_tenure.html

Consideration for instructor promotion may be requested by the instructor or recommended by the department.

Overview of the Promotion Process

An application for promotion receives up to five independent reviews, in the order shown:

- Departmental Committee
- Department Head
- COS Instructor Promotion Committee (COS IPC)
- Dean of the College of Science
- Provost

Any application that receives a positive recommendation from one or both of the Departmental Committee and the Department Head moves on to the College level. An application that reaches the College level continues to the Provost upon receiving a positive recommendation from one or both of the COS IPC and the Dean. The Provost makes the final decision on applications reaching that level. An applicant is provided written feedback if failing to advance at either the department or college level.

Applications that are turned down at the department level can be appealed, but only after having been turned down in at least two separate years. A negative decision at the college level, or by the provost, is final and cannot be appealed. Details for the appeals process can be found at the provost's website at the link provided above.

Specifics of the Promotion Process

The instructor promotion process proceeds according to the college-issued timeline, attached to the end of this document. The candidate prepares a dossier describing her/his performance and accomplishments and submits this to the departmental committee. This dossier is the document on which the request for promotion is judged at each of the five steps of the process. The culmination of each step is a letter containing a recommendation, pro or con, for the promotion. The provost's webpage (see link provided above) outlines other expected content of these letters; in addition see the next two paragraphs. The format for the dossier, which is prescribed by the provost, may also be found at the link listed above. In preparing a dossier, a candidate for promotion should review sample candidate statements at that web site. The College of

Science requires that full SPOT reports from the preceding five years be appended to the dossier as supplementary material.

The Departmental Committee reviews the dossier of each candidate and prepares a letter stating its recommendation, positive or negative, for promotion, and reporting the numeric division of the committee's vote. This letter should contain a thorough summary of the candidate's qualifications for promotion, reflecting the evaluation of the credentials by the committee with an informative, individualized assessment of the candidate's activities and contributions. In the case of a mixed vote, a minority report may be written. In the case of a negative vote, the letter will explain the basis for the negative recommendation. The Department Head independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the committee. The Head's letter need not repeat the information in the committee's letter, but may be a relatively brief statement from the Head's perspective, along with her/his recommendation. A recommendation that is not in agreement with the committee's should be more fully explicated and justified. If the Head concurs with a negative recommendation from the committee, then the case is ended and does not move on to the college level; the Head provides written feedback to the candidate should this occur.

The COS IPC will prepare a letter about each candidate whose application reaches the college level, stating its recommendation, positive or negative, for promotion, and reporting the numeric division of the committee's vote. Letters from the COS IPC are succinct and need not repeat material well summarized at the departmental level. If the vote is not unanimous, a brief explanation of the concerns represented by the dissenting votes is included in the college committee's statement. In the case of a negative vote, the IPC will explain the basis for the negative recommendation. The Dean independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the committee. If the Dean concurs with a negative recommendation from the IPC, then the case is ended and does not move on to the Provost; the Dean provides written feedback to the candidate should this occur. Otherwise, the Dean writes a letter with her/his recommendation and forwards the dossier to the Provost. If the Dean does not concur with an IPC recommendation, the letter will explain the basis for the lack of concurrence. Notifications about instructor promotion decisions are made by the Provost according to the published calendar.

Departmental Committee

Composition of the departmental instructor promotion committee, and its procedures, are determined by the department within the bounds set by the Provost and the faculty handbook.

COS Instructor Promotion Committee

It is the responsibility of each department and school within the College to select one of its Advanced Instructors or Senior Instructors to serve on the COS IPC. The selection process is at the discretion of the department or school. Committee members serve

three-year terms. An instructor may choose to step off the IPC at the end of a 3-year term. Due to this, and due to the fact that some COS departments do not currently have any Advanced or Senior Instructors, the size of the COS IPC may vary from year to year. Minimal membership is five, achieved by Dean appointment of Tenured/Track Faculty and/or Collegiate Faculty if necessary. The Dean, or other representative of the College of Science Dean's office as appointed by the Dean, serves as a non-voting member and committee chair. A faculty member serving on both the department committee and the COS IPC may vote at only one of these levels. Faculty members should not serve on any promotion committee evaluating a spouse or partner. It is not sufficient to leave the room while the spouse or partner is discussed.

Instructor Rank Expectations

- Good instruction as evidenced by such measures as Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) evaluations, student responses to supplemental questions, activities in a non-classroom setting, and peer reviews.
- Participation in department meetings and workshops related to programs of instruction.
- Well-developed syllabi and instructional materials that reflect program goals and requirements.
- Adherence to the Virginia Tech Principles of Ethical Behavior and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, as described in section 2.23 of the Faculty Handbook.

Criteria for Promotion to Advanced Instructor

In addition to these basic expectations for the Instructor rank, successful candidates for Advanced Instructor should demonstrate engagement with the Virginia Tech department in which they are appointed and increasing knowledge of the teaching discipline, as represented by a combination of two or more of the following activities. The strongest cases will show a pattern of these activities throughout the promotion period:

- Exemplary instruction, evidenced in the dossier by reference to such items as SPOT evaluations, student responses to supplemental questions, activities in a non-classroom setting, peer reviews, or annual departmental evaluations.
- Evidence of extended professional development; for example, department workshops related to the teaching assignment, participation in university workshops or study groups on teaching, completion of courses or short-courses related to pedagogy or subject matter, or participation in professional conferences.
- Course or curricular development or development of new pedagogies. For example, contributing to a textbook or to online teaching materials available to others beyond the instructor's own classes; preparing a course for online delivery, active learning or flipped classroom models; or teaching a new course title.

- Substantial contributions to the instructional program in the form of advising or mentoring students; for example, academic advising of undergraduate students, GTA advising or mentoring, peer mentoring, or advising student organizations.
- Service related to the instructional mission; for example, an undergraduate conference, diversity initiatives, outreach, or active participation with appropriate department committees.

Criteria for Promotion to Senior Instructor

Senior instructor is the capstone rank in the instructor series and promotion to this rank denotes, when applicable, exemplary instruction, demonstrated continued professional development, and significant contributions to undergraduate education. Senior instructors may have considerable responsibility in teaching courses, mentoring junior colleagues or graduate teaching assistants, overseeing course development or special instructional initiatives, student advising, or other non-teaching responsibilities reflecting their role as instructional leaders. Promotion to the rank of senior instructor is generally accompanied by a renewable 5-year contract. Advanced Instructors applying for promotion to Senior Instructor must demonstrate significant achievement in two or more of the areas outlined above since the last promotion.

Timeline for College of Science Instructor Promotions, 2024-25

September- October 2024	Departments determine instructors who will be considered for promotion. Candidates assemble dossiers in format provided by the Provost and with supplementary material required by COS.
October 11, 2024	The College of Science Instructor Promotion Committee (COS IPC) is finalized with names of incoming members provided by the departments to the Dean's office. Timeline and procedures are sent to all new and returning members.
*November 1, 2024	Notify the Dean's Office (Amber Robinson) with names of instructors who will be considered for promotion by the department.
November- December 2024	Department committees meet to consider candidates and make recommendations. Department Heads subsequently and independently evaluate candidates and make their recommendations.
*January 24, 2025	Promotion dossiers submitted electronically to College of Science NAS. All dossiers are to be submitted, regardless of outcome at the department level. Dean's staff checks dossiers for accuracy and completeness.
*February 3, 2025	Promotion dossiers of those candidates advancing from the department level are distributed to the COS IPC.
February 10-14, 2025	COS IPC meeting to be scheduled during this block. One 2-hour meeting is typically sufficient unless there are a large number of candidates.
*February 21, 2025	Recommendations of COS IPC due to the Dean.
February 2025	Dean reviews dossiers and writes her/his recommendation for each candidate.
*March 1, 2025	Dossiers receiving a positive recommendation at the college level are submitted to the Provost.

*Due dates; all other department-level dates are suggested timelines.