

**College of Science (COS) Expectations and
Guidelines
for
Promotions in the Professor of Practice Series
(updates are highlighted)**

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I. Overview of the Promotion Process

Promotion to a higher rank is granted to faculty members in the Professor of Practice series who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in instructional responsibilities, and who show significant evidence of continued professional growth and development, including an appropriate level of recognition outside of the University through a range of professional activities. Consideration for promotion may be requested by the faculty member or recommended by the department.

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

- Departmental Committee
- Department Head
- COS Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice Promotion Committee
- Dean of the College of Science
- Provost

Composition of the departmental Professor of Practice promotion committee, and its procedures, are determined by the department within the bounds set by the Provost and the Faculty Handbook.

The College of Science CF & PoP promotion committee reviews both Professor of Practice and Collegiate Faculty applications for promotion. The goal is for this

committee to be comprised of faculty at the associate or full level in the Professor of Practice and Collegiate Faculty ranks. Due to the currently small number of such faculty in the college, this may not be possible for several years. Until then, candidates will be considered at the college level by a committee that will include some tenured faculty members. Committee members are nominated by COS departments and appointed by the Dean. 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. Minimal committee size will be four voting members. A faculty member serving on both the department committee and the COS CF & PoP promotion committee must vote at the departmental level. 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.

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 Collegiate Faculty and Professor of Practice (CF & PoP) Promotion Committee 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 (details for appeals can be found in the Faculty Handbook). A negative decision at the college level, or by the provost, is final and cannot be appealed.

As stated in the Faculty Handbook, a negative recommendation on a promotion request need not translate into termination of employment. Indeed, a faculty member in the Professor of Practice series may remain at their current rank as long as their performance warrants continued employment and serves departmental needs. In COS, promotion and retention decisions are made independently, and being turned down for promotion does not preclude reapplying in a future year.

II. Specifics of the Promotion Process

The Professor of Practice promotion process proceeds according to a college-issued timeline, available in Section V of this document.

A candidate for promotion prepares a dossier describing her/his performance and accomplishments (see Section IV of this document) and submits this to the departmental committee. Once a dossier is submitted by the candidate, it may not be revised or modified except for addition of materials in Section II of the dossier by department head, departmental promotion committee, dean and college promotion committee. Should additional information become available or if errors are identified during the review process, they should be included and/or explained as part of the department head letter and/or dean letter. 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 College of Science requires that full SPOT reports from courses taught by a candidate be included in the dossier as supplementary material, to cover the length of the candidate's instructional career at Virginia Tech up to the application for promotion, though not to exceed the five years immediately preceding the application for promotion.

Each PoP promotion dossier must contain letters of evaluation from reviewers external to the candidate's department. The College of Science requires that at least three of these letters be obtained, and that at least two of the letters obtained are from reviewers external to Virginia Tech. In the case of promotion to (full) Professor of Practice, the university requires at least four external letters be obtained and expects to see all external letters received, not just selected letters.

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 committee letter should also include a list of names of the eligible voting members and note the names of ineligible or non-voting observers. The department committee letter should explicitly make a recommendation for or against promotion.

The Department Head independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the committee. The Head's letter is limited to 5-6 pages in length and should clearly state their recommendation on the case. **The letter should be sure to address all areas as outlined in the Provost's guidelines.** Particulars of the candidate's professional assignment should be provided, including the percentage of that assignment to teaching, for scholarly activities, and for service and outreach. The

Head's letter need not repeat the information in the committee's letter, but must address the candidate's performance relative to the department's expectations for performance in the professor of practice series, explaining those expectations and the procedures by which the candidate was evaluated. If the faculty candidate did not meet an expectation, the letter should explain the reason(s) for not completing the expectation and may highlight other evidence that might show the candidate's success in a related area or intermediate progress in that area (e.g. scholarship published with students, student progress towards degree such as exams completed, etc.).

The Head should summarize the opinions of the external reviewers, providing explanations for any disagreements with those opinions. The Head's letter should also explain why each reviewer is well-placed to write an external letter. If a reviewer has co-authored with the candidate, the letter should provide an explanation of how the reviewer is sufficiently removed from the candidate and how they can provide an independent and unbiased review.

The Head's letter must include a paragraph that states that "I have reviewed the list of external reviewers and they are not former advisors, post-doctoral supervisors, co-investigators on grants, co-authors on recent publications, or have any relationship to the candidate that may be perceived as being too close.", or "I have reviewed this list of reviewers and they are not former advisors, post-doctoral supervisors, co-investigators on grants, co-authors on recent publications, or have any relationship to the candidate that may be perceived as being too close with the exception of <<name.>>." The letter must then clearly explain the situation and explain why the letter should or should not be considered by the college and university committees.)

If the Head's recommendation is not in agreement with the committee's, this 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 CF & PoP promotion committee 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. The committee letter should also include the list of names of the eligible voting members and note the names of ineligible or non-voting observers. Letters from the COS CF & PoP promotion committee should be detailed but succinct, as they 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 committee will explain the basis for the negative recommendation.

The Dean independently evaluates each dossier and the recommendations of the committee. The statement from the Dean is an informative assessment of the candidate's accomplishments from the perspective of the college and the Dean. The Dean should provide an integrative summary of the candidate's contributions to the department, college, and university goals. In cases of a split vote or differing

recommendations from the department or from the college committee, the Dean should explain and contextualize those differences so to aid understanding at the next level of review. If the Dean concurs with a negative recommendation from the committee, 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 a CF & PoP promotion committee recommendation, the letter will explain the basis for the lack of concurrence. Notifications about PoP promotion decisions are made by the Provost according to a published calendar.

III. Expectations for the Professor of Practice Series

- Quality instruction as evidenced by such measures as Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) evaluations, student responses to supplemental questions, activities in non-classroom settings, and peer reviews. Note that two letters or reports from departmental or college peer reviewers since the last promotion are required. Faculty whose evaluations of teaching, including peer evaluations and SPOT scores suggest improvements in teaching are warranted should be sure to list what they have done to improve in subsection M of the promotion dossier (e.g. CETL and TLOS workshops).
- Participation in departmental activities as related to programs of instruction, curricular development, and outreach, and their relationships and integration with other programs at the university. Development of leadership within the department on curricular issues related to the faculty member's areas of practice.
- Pedagogical innovation in terms of course development and/or methods of instructional delivery, with emphasis on a practitioner's needs and perspectives.
- Proficiency at understanding and evaluating research that applies to their field and translating it to classroom settings.
- Professional activity and development that includes: publication in the faculty member's area of practice, and/or presentation of findings at conferences, workshops, and other professional venues; active roles in professional organizations; and fostering connections of departmental members (faculty and/or students) with non-academic members of the profession. There is no expectation of a research program at a level appropriate for a tenure-track faculty appointment.
- 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.

Where appropriate to their assignment, faculty members in the Professor of Practice series may interact with graduate students and interns, serve on graduate committees, and chair graduate advisory committees with the approval of the academic unit and the graduate school. In this case, faculty should describe graduate mentoring accomplishments in detail, including exams completed, scholarship published, funding of graduate students on grants and contracts, the successful graduation of master's and/or Ph.D. students and other milestones that demonstrate effective and successful graduate student mentorship. They may also be expected to serve on departmental, college, or university committees as contributing members of their departments and

the broader university community.

A faculty member in the Professor of Practice series should work with their department head to clarify and detail the expectations of their position within the guidelines provided by this document. This series allows for a range of emphases to be placed on the various performance categories, so that positions may best be crafted to serve departmental needs. It is the joint responsibility of the department head and the faculty member to assure that expectations are sufficiently clear.

Criteria for Promotion to Associate Professor of Practice

Credentials for appointment or promotion to this rank must document a record of significant instructional experience with sustained excellence, and of accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment. The College of Science requires that at least three letters of evaluation from reviewers external to the candidate's department be obtained, and that at least two of the letters obtained are from reviewers external to Virginia Tech. 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.
- Professional development contributing to a growing regional or national reputation, to include participation in professional conferences and/or publications in venues deemed appropriate for their assignment by their department.
- External funding as appropriate to the assignment.
- Substantial contributions to the department's instructional program in the form of teaching the skills and values of the profession, overseeing internships and project experiences, and career advising, and other areas where a practitioner's experience can be brought to bear.
- Substantive service to the department, college, and/or university.
- All faculty members are expected to demonstrate professional collegiality, and to conduct themselves with the utmost integrity, behaviors which are prerequisite for promotion to any rank. Collegiality includes but is not limited to participating in meaningful and positive ways in the activities of the department, college and university; interacting with others (students, staff, and faculty) in respectful ways in all communications, whether spoken or written; acting with integrity in all interactions with members of the university community and in any capacity in which a faculty member may be viewed as representing their department and/or Virginia Tech; and supporting the intellectual and professional development of colleagues at VT and elsewhere.

Criteria for Promotion to Professor of Practice

This is the capstone rank in the Professor of Practice series and promotion to this rank requires exemplary performance across the full range of PoP expectations. Promotion to this rank requires distinguished professional achievement, and regional, national, or international prominence in the field. Credentials must document a record of significant instructional experience with continued excellence, of scholarly accomplishments relevant to the field and type of assignment, and of ongoing, valuable service within and external to the University. External validation of such accomplishments and leadership in the field is expected. The dossier in support of promotion to this rank must contain letters of evaluation from external reviewers. The university requires at least four external letters be obtained but expects to see all external letters received, not just selected letters.

IV. Dossier Preparation

As with other faculty promotion processes at Virginia Tech, the format for and content within the dossier is prescribed by the provost, with a template made available on the provost's webpage (provost.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/promotion_tenure.html).

Beginning in 2023-24, each dossier must contain a dossier certification form. The form is signed by the candidate certifying that their dossier is an accurate and truthful record of their scholarly achievement and that they assume full responsibility for the presentation and formatting of the dossier. The name of the department head, chair or school director, the department/school P&T Committee chair, or the candidate's faculty mentor who reviewed the draft of the dossier and provided the candidate with dossier preparation feedback and mentoring should also be included.

For Promotion to Professor of Practice only, each dossier must contain at a minimum four external review letters. All letters received, not just selected letters, should be included in the dossier. External reviewers are expected to be in positions of relevance to evaluate the associate professor of practice's regional, national, and international prominence. University guidelines state that external reviewers should not include former advisors, post-doctoral supervisors, co-investigators on grants, or co-authors on recent publication or should not have other relationships that may be perceived as too close to the candidate. In this case, "recent" is defined consistent with NSF standards to mean within 4 years (48 months). When possible, avoid selecting external reviewers from the candidate's Ph.D. granting institution or from universities at which the faculty member had a prior faculty position.

Letters to external reviewers should contain text that:

- a. Asks the reviewer to self-disclose their relationship with the candidate and any disqualifying (due to conflict of interest) relationships
- b. Describes the confidentiality related to their letters
- c. Describes the VT professor of practice series in terms of responsibilities
- d. Describes VT's criteria for professor of practice promotion

More detail regarding process, guidelines and requirements for Professor of Practice External Letters may be found on the Provost's website

June 15, 2024

V.COS 2024-25 Promotion Timetable for Professor of Practice Series

April – May 2024	Departments determine faculty members who will be considered for promotion in either the Professor of Practice (PoP) series or the Collegiate Faculty (CF) series.
*June 1, 2024	Notify the Dean’s Office (Amber Robinson) of faculty for whom external letters will be requested. External letters are required for promotion to associate or full in the CF series, and for promotion to full in the PoP series.
May – June 2024	External reviewers are identified and invited to serve. Be sure to include verbiage about criteria and self-disqualification.
July 1, 2024	Letters and candidates’ packets, including candidates’ statements, are sent to external reviewers. Be sure to include required verbiage in letter.
September 14, 2024	Due date for external letters to be received.
October 2024	Departmental deliberations and vote, and evaluation by the department head; dossiers for candidates going forward to the college are completed.
*November 15, 2024	Promotion dossiers submitted electronically to College of Science NAS.
January 20-24, 2025	COS CF & PoP Promotion Committee meeting, to review dossiers and issue recommendations, is scheduled within these dates.
*January 31, 2025	Letters from COS CF & PoP Promotion Committee, evaluating candidates, are finalized and submitted to the Dean.
February 2025	College completes the final dossiers for all CF and PoP candidates going forward to the University Committee.
*March 1, 2025	Final dossiers submitted to the Provost’s Office.

***Due dates;** all other dates are suggested timeframes for departments.