

University of South Carolina Faculty Manual Revisions

Question and Answer Document

January 31, 2024

This document answers many commonly asked questions about the proposed changes surrounding professional-track faculty. If you have a question about any items in the document or not addressed within the document, please contact:

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1) Why are the changes being suggested?

The current faculty manual addresses professional-track faculty with a mere nine sentences. The titles, descriptions, minimum entry requirements, and other essential details are in ACAFs and other policy documents, not the faculty manual. Since PTF are faculty, their rights and responsibilities should be enumerated in the faculty manual and under the purview of the voting faculty of the university.

2) Who participated in the creation and review of these proposed changes?

The University Committee on Professional-Track Faculty (UCPTF) and the Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) jointly worked on the document, with review by several Faculty Senate chairs, our AAUP local leaders, and various faculty members interested in the document.

3) Have faculty members participated in the process?

Faculty members from across the university met with us between December 2023 and the Town Hall Meeting on January 18, 2024, or during the town hall itself. Many of their comments are incorporated in revisions to the original document posted in December and will be presented as amendments to the original document at the Senate's February 2024 meeting.

4) The document is somewhat vague in some areas and seems to assign specifics to the units. Why?

The university has over 50 departments in place, and most have bylaws and policies unique to their discipline and organization. The revisions are written broadly to allow those units to use the Faculty Manual as an overarching framework rather than a definitive set of rules. This gives **units** the flexibility to add more definitive language suitable for the circumstances of their specific unit. Units may also be more restrictive if desired, so long as their unit policies do not violate the Faculty Manual.

5) My unit committee is discussing the newly added Teaching Professor titles in addition to the titles already existing. Do we have to use all of them?

No, you only need to use the titles that fit within your unit and/or discipline. You then further define those roles and responsibilities in your specific unit criteria. However, keep in mind that if you do not add a set of titles initially in your unit criteria, you would be required to formally update the unit criteria (including approval through the chain to the UCPTF) if you decide to add those titles later.

6) If my unit adds the Teaching Professor titles or any other titles not currently in use at the unit level, are reclassifications to that new title automatic for faculty members?

No. Any title changes would first require new unit criteria to be written that includes those new titles, and the new unit criteria would have to be reviewed and approved through the UCPTF level. After that time, switching a faculty member from one title to another would be handled by the dean of your unit and the provost's office. The faculty member would need to request the transfer.

7) What is the differentiation between an Instructor/Lecturer and a Teaching Professor?

The primary difference between the two is a terminal degree (such as a Ph.D. or equivalent for other disciplines) is required for a Teaching Professor. In contrast, a master's degree is required for an appointment as an Instructor or Lecturer. The unit criteria can call out expectations beyond those minimal requirements for those titles and descriptions if the unit desires.

8) Does a Teaching Professor or Clinical Professor have a research expectation?

Each **unit** will decide what workload allocation is required between teaching, research, and service for all titles it uses. Further, since professional-track roles vary considerably across and within units, each faculty member should have an allocation agreed upon with their supervisor and spelled out in their contract.

9) You currently have the title of Clinical Professor. If your unit adopts the Teaching Professor titles, do you have to change my title if you don't want to?

No. Employees with existing titles are not required to have the title change. If the faculty member decides to pursue a title change, they need to make sure the qualifications for the new title are met and request a title change. This administrative process is handled by your dean and the provost's office.

10) Does each department within a school have to create its own unit criteria?

No. A college or school can decide to create its unit criteria at the college/school level or for each department. While similar in some ways, PTF criteria creation and review is an independent process from creation and approval of tenure-track unit criteria (i.e., they do not have to be the same).