

**Faculty Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Award Procedure Guidelines
Heersink School of Medicine – Tenure Track and Non-tenure Track**

1. Faculty Appointments

Ranks and Criteria

University of Alabama Heersink SOM faculty members are appointed into one of three tracks. The Tenure-earning (TE) and Non-tenure earning tracks (NTE) are reserved for those faculty who have a full- or part-time regular appointment at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). These tracks (outlined in Table A) provide the flexibility required for recognizing the contributions made by every researcher, educator, and clinician across UAB Medicine.

Table A. Appointment Tracks of the Heersink SOM

	Tenure-Earning Track	Non-tenure Earning Track
Eligibility	Faculty of the Heersink SOM	Faculty of the Heersink SOM
Faculty Appointment Rank (Titles)		Instructor
	Assistant Professor	Assistant Professor
	Associate Professor	Associate Professor
	Professor	Professor
Areas of Excellence for Promotion Above Assistant Professor	Research	Research
	Teaching	Teaching
	Service	Service
Numbers of Areas of Excellence Required for Promotion Above Assistant Professor	Two	One
Minimum Level of Recognition/Reputation Required for Promotion Above Assistant Professor	National	National
Eligible for Tenure	Yes	No

Criteria for appointment include contributions in the areas of research, teaching, or service. All Heersink SOM faculty members are expected to be engaged in scholarly activities that support these efforts in ways that are consistent with their unique roles and faculty track. Importantly, however, at the time of their initial appointment there is an expectation of excellence (or an expectation of the potential for excellence) for faculty in these areas. Individuals appointed in the TE track are expected to demonstrate excellence or potential for excellence in at least two areas; those in the NTE track are expected to demonstrate excellence or potential for excellence in one area designated in their respective tracks. Faculty appointed at UAB as full-time regular or part-time regular must be appointed to the tenure-earning or non-tenure earning tracks. For information regarding UAB guidelines please see the [UAB Faculty Handbook](#)

Instructor, Non-tenure Earning Track

Appointments to the rank of Instructor are non-tenure earning and typically require a doctorate-level degree. In the rare circumstance a department proposes hiring a candidate without a terminal degree, a justification of need must be submitted to the HSOM Dean's Office to request pre-approval. These appointments are generally for one year and are renewable.

Assistant Professor, Tenure Earning or Non-tenure Earning Tracks

Appointments to this rank usually require the following:

- Two or more years' experience following receipt of doctorate-level degree
- Academic credentials and demonstration of level of specialized accomplishment appropriate to the mission of the Department and the Heersink SOM
- An expectation of collegiality and participation in service in the Department and/or Heersink SOM
- Demonstration of potential for scholarship in the areas of research, teaching, or service

Associate Professor, Tenure Earning or Non-tenure Earning Tracks

Appointments to this rank usually require the following:

- Five or more years in the rank of Assistant Professor
- Academic credentials and demonstration of level of specialized accomplishment appropriate to the mission of the Department and the Heersink SOM
- Demonstration of collegiality and participation in the Department and/or Heersink SOM
- Evidence of excellence in scholarly achievement in the areas of research, teaching, and/or service
- Demonstration of national peer recognition in the conduct of scholarly activities

Professor, Tenure Earning or Non-tenure Earning Tracks

Appointments to this rank usually require the following:

- Distinguished performance as an Associate Professor with at least 5 years in that rank
- Academic credentials and demonstration of level of specialized accomplishment appropriate to the mission of the Department and the Heersink SOM
- Demonstration of collegiality, involvement, and leadership as a citizen of the Department and/or Heersink SOM
- Evidence of sustained excellence in scholarly achievement and productivity in the areas of research, teaching, and/or service

- Demonstration of national peer recognition in the conduct of scholarly activities

2. Heersink SOM Promotion Standards

Faculty member contributions to activities in the areas of research, teaching, and service are evaluated for promotion and the award of tenure. All faculty members are expected to be engaged in scholarly activities that support the areas of research, teaching, and service in ways that are consistent with their unique roles and faculty promotion tracks. Further, to attain promotion or the award of tenure, faculty are expected to demonstrate sustained excellence in the mission areas appropriate to their professional roles. For faculty in the TE and NTE tracks, this excellence is closely related to scholarship that includes national peer review of other scholars. Individuals being promoted in the TE track are expected to demonstrate excellence in at least two areas designated in the TE track; those being promoted in the NTE track are expected to demonstrate excellence in any one area designated in their respective tracks (Table A). While promotion is based upon achieving excellence in two or one area(s), all faculty members are encouraged to contribute to other mission areas of the Heersink SOM.

Assistant Professor, Tenure Earning or Non-tenure Earning Tracks

Promotion to this rank usually requires the following:

- Two or more years of work experience following receipt of doctorate level degree
- Academic credentials and demonstration of level of specialized accomplishment appropriate to the mission of the department and the Heersink SOM.
- An expectation of collegiality and participation in service in the department and/or Heersink SOM.
- Demonstration of potential for contributions in the areas of research, teaching, or service.

Associate Professor, Tenure Earning or Non-tenure Earning Tracks

Promotion to this rank usually requires the following:

- Five or more years in the rank of Assistant Professor
- Academic credentials and demonstration of level of specialized accomplishment appropriate to the mission of the department and the Heersink SOM.
- Demonstration of collegiality and involvement in the department and/or Heersink SOM.
- Evidence of excellence in scholarly achievement in the areas of research, teaching, and/or service
- Demonstration of national peer recognition in the conduct of scholarly activities

Professor, Tenure Earning or Non-tenure Earning Tracks

Promotion to this rank usually requires the following:

- Distinguished performance as an Associate Professor, with at least 5 years in rank
- Demonstration of collegiality, involvement, and leadership as a citizen of the Department and/or Heersink SOM
- Evidence of sustained excellence in scholarship and productivity in the areas of research, teaching, and/or service
- Demonstration of national peer recognition in the conduct of scholarly activities

Note: The requirements above regarding five or more years in rank for promotion to the Associate Professor-level or Professor-level applies to faculty hired on or after October 1, 2023.

All faculty hired prior to October 1, 2023, must have three or more years in current rank for promotion to Associate Professor or Professor.

3. Examples of Excellence in Areas of Faculty Activity

Examples of activities consistent with the above guidelines for each of the three areas are provided below. These are not meant to be comprehensive and all-inclusive listings, but rather to provide examples of what constitutes excellence in each of the areas. A faculty member can be recognized as achieving excellence through a combination of activities listed in each area. Additionally, it is recognized that some activities may be classified into more than one category of activity. Finally, the various individuals and faculty peer review groups may consider additional accomplishments in their judgement of the excellence of a particular faculty member being considered for promotion or tenure.

Research (Associate Professor)

- Demonstration of initiative and independence in research activities in basic or translational science, clinical outcomes, quality improvement or population-based research.
- Evidence of research independence includes but is not limited to receipt of one or more substantial extramural grants (e.g., PI of non-mentored extramural funding at a R01-equivalent level).
- Publication of independent research findings and scholarly papers in peer reviewed journals. (Publications as first, senior or corresponding author is regarded as stronger evidence of research independence.)
- Obtaining grants and/or contracts for support of research.
- Presentation of research and other scholarly findings at scientific and professional meetings. Service on thesis or dissertation committees.

Research (Professor)

- Sustained and outstanding performance in the examples cited for the associate professor level
- Serving as mentor, co-author, or senior author of student or resident presentations at local, regional, or national meetings
- Receipt of invitations to preside over sessions at national or international scientific meetings
- Participation in external review committees, study sections, or service as editor of scientific or professional journals or textbooks
- Receipt of recognition of excellence in research by professional or scientific institutions or organizations

Teaching (Associate Professor)

- Demonstration of mastery of content and method, documented by student, resident, postdoctoral fellow, and/or peer evaluation (All teaching activities should receive consideration.)
- Taking responsibility for the design, organization, coordination, and evaluation of an educational program

- Developing and/or presenting effective continuing education or other professional programs, including invited presentations
- Providing effective supervision, guidance, and/or counseling to trainees, including graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and/or house officers
- Participation in educational program planning and general curricular activities
- Publication of papers and/or presentations at professional meetings on topics related to education
- Demonstration of innovation in teaching methods and production of texts, educational software or courseware
- Receipt of recognition as an exemplary scientist or clinician whose mentoring and teaching activities provide an outstanding role model for students
- Serving as principal investigator on grants or contracts for educational projects

Teaching (Professor)

- Sustained and outstanding performance in the examples cited for the associate professor level
- Leadership through design, organization, coordination, and evaluation of educational programs
- Administrative responsibility at the school or departmental level for curriculum
- Leadership in continuing education or other professional programs; invitations as visiting professor at other institutions
- Supervision of staff teaching within a course, division, department, or within the school
- Sustained productivity in publication of papers and/or presentations at professional meetings on topics related to education
- Sustained innovation and leadership in production of texts, educational software, or courseware
- Record of sustained ability to maintain external funding to support innovative educational projects
- Sustained recognition as an exemplary scientist, teacher or clinician whose activities provide an outstanding role model for students

Service (Associate Professor)

- Providing measurably excellent clinical productivity and exemplary patient care
- Providing demonstrable leadership or initiative in administrative or committee roles that augment the missions of the Department and/or Heersink SOM in clinical care, research, and/or education such as originality in problem solving, authorship of guidelines or quality reports and policies
- Providing staff responsibility for a service or specific area of patient care
- Providing demonstrable leadership in quality improvement/assurance or patient safety initiatives
- Serving as critical member or director of a research core laboratory
- Serving on the UAB Faculty Senate
- Serving as editor of a journal
- Serving on a grant review committee
- Serving on graduate student committees (e.g., thesis committee)

- Serving on national committees that serve to set guidelines/recommendations for research (e.g., NIH committees, professional societies)
- Serving on committees with the department, school, university and/or affiliated institutions
- Engaging in mentoring junior faculty colleagues
- Serving on committees to develop clinical practice guidelines or to formulate healthcare policies
- Providing service to the professional or lay community through education, consultation or other roles
- Participation as a key member of a large research team(s), proving documented critical scientific contribution(s) or serving in a significant role in the research (“team science” contributions)

Service (Professor)

- Continued demonstration of excellence of measurably excellent clinical productivity and exemplary patient care.
- Serving on committees with the department, school, university and/or affiliated institutions
- Serving on the UAB Faculty Senate
- Serving on committees to develop clinical practice guidelines or to formulate healthcare policies
- Providing service to the professional or lay community through education, consultation or other roles
- Sustained exemplary leadership in administrative committee roles that augment the missions of the Department and/or Heersink SOM in clinical care, research and/or education such as originality in problem solving, authorship of guidelines or quality reports and policies
- Providing sustained responsibility for a service or specific area of patient care or clinical teaching
- Sustained excellence in the leadership of quality improvement/assurance or patient safety initiatives
- Recognition as an authority by other schools and departments within UAB and by local, state, regional and national organizations or institutions
- Appointment to responsible position(s) within the institution or its affiliates (e.g., chairs a committee, department, or division; membership on major Department or Heersink SOM committees)
- Extensive and excellent mentorship of faculty colleagues
- Continued service on committees to develop clinical practice guidelines or to formulate regional or national healthcare policies
- Election to responsible positions on civic boards or organizations concerned with health care issues at the local, state, regional, national, or international levels

4. Heersink SOM Tenure Guidelines

The awarding of tenure is a serious and significant step for both the faculty member and the Heersink SOM. Tenure is awarded to individual faculty members upon evidence of the capacity

and likelihood for continued intellectual, scholarly, and professional vitality; upon evidence of the ability and willingness to perform assigned duties; and upon evidence of a sense of responsibility and dedication to make the continuing exemplary performance of duties a reasonable expectation. Tenure is not awarded merely on the basis of time in service.

Any faculty member appointed to a tenure-earning faculty position shall have a maximum of ten years to earn tenure. This period will begin on the first day of October after the appointment on the tenure-earning track. If tenure has not been awarded during or before the ninth year on the tenure-earning track, the appointment for the final year shall be a terminal appointment. To qualify for consideration of tenure during the terminal year, the individual must have been considered for tenure prior to the terminal year. Therefore, a packet requesting tenure must be submitted and ruled upon for all faculty members in or before their ninth year on TE track. Only in cases in which there is substantial new evidence in support of candidacy for tenure may a candidate be considered for tenure during the terminal year (see section 2.15.9 of the UAB Faculty Handbook). This review shall serve as the primary basis upon which to determine whether substantial new evidence is apparent. Each level of review (departmental committee, if applicable, school committee, Dean, and Provost) must make this determination. Faculty members on the TE track who are not awarded tenure at the review during the ninth year will receive a one-year notice of termination unless they transfer to the NTE track or gain tenure in the tenth year.

Note that promotion and tenure may be sought at the same time or may be sought separately. Tenure-earning Assistant Professors often simultaneously seek promotion along with the award of tenure. However, a tenure-earning Assistant Professor may seek promotion prior to application for the award of tenure but may not apply for tenure without promotion. In all cases, the Faculty Council decides on the award of tenure separately from the decision on appointment or promotion. Criteria for granting tenure include the following:

- Achievement of rank of at least Associate Professor on the TE track.
- Academic credentials consistent with the missions of the department and the Heersink SOM.
- National reputation reflected by peer recognition, presentations at national professional meetings, and productivity in published works.
- Evidence of strong institutional citizenship, manifest as effective participation in service activities, mentoring of more junior colleagues, support of university missions and values, collegiality, and leadership initiative.
- Evidence of sustained, significant scholarship in at least two of the following three areas: research, teaching, and service.

Individuals appointed to faculty positions at UAB may be appointed to the tenure-earning faculty only once during a period of continuous employment at UAB. That is, with appropriate approval, individuals initially appointed to the tenure-earning faculty may later be appointed to the non-tenure-earning faculty, but they may not subsequently return to the tenure-earning faculty in that position during a period of continuous employment. They may seek appointment to a different position at UAB, which may be tenure-earning, tenured, or non-tenure-earning, if selected through national level recruitment. Individuals initially appointed to the non-tenure-earning faculty may later be appointed to the tenure-earning faculty position provided that the search

under which he or she is selected is for a tenure-earning faculty position. When appropriate, these individuals could then return to the non-tenure-earning faculty. Appointment change from a tenure-earning to a non-tenure-earning faculty position requires notification of the faculty member whose status is to change and the approval of his/her Chair, the Dean, and the Provost. Similarly, an appointment change from the non-tenure track to the academic clinician track, or vice versa, requires approval from the department Chair, Dean, and Provost, but is not subject to a restriction on the number of times such a change can be sought.

For additional information, please refer to the [UAB Faculty Handbook](#).

5. Promotion/Tenure Process for Tenure-earning Track and Non-tenure Track

Promotions involving the ranks of Instructor to Assistant Professor only require review and approval by the Dean(s) and the Provost. As such, these proposals may be submitted at this time or anytime throughout the year.

Promotions to the rank of Associate Professor or Professor (TE or NTE), and the award of tenure require review by the Faculty Council. The Faculty Council meets once per academic year to deliberate on promotion and tenure packets. This meeting generally occurs in May so that approved packets may be advanced from the Dean's Office to the Provost's Office for final approval in time for the promotion and/or award of tenure to be effective on October 1 of the same year. Time at rank is counted toward promotion starting the date hired to the current rank. The tenure-earning period shall be determined by the date of appointment if it is October 1. If the appointment date comes after October 1, the October 1 which next follows the initial date of appointment to a tenure-earning position shall determine the start of the tenure-earning period.

In order to provide faculty time to prepare their packets and department APT committees time to deliberate and advance these to the Faculty Council, the overall process for individual faculty members generally starts the fall prior to the May Faculty Council meeting. Written notification from the Dean is distributed to Department Chairs/administrators to begin the process for the upcoming promotion/tenure award cycle and includes the calendar with specific dates of deadlines for completion of key tasks in advance of Faculty Council review.

Departments/divisions shall prepare promotion and/or tenure award proposals as outlined in the Heersink SOM instructions. These proposals require review and approval or denial by the Department Appointment, Promotion and Tenure committee prior to submission for review and consideration by the Faculty Council. Deadlines for review by departmental committees are set by each department.

Following the Faculty Council meeting, the Faculty Council Chair or Vice-Chair will contact faculty members and Department Chairs regarding any candidates whose applications were disapproved. The faculty member may then request a reconsideration of the Faculty Council recommendation at a special meeting that occurs generally in June and includes another Faculty Council vote. Once the second vote is complete, the Faculty Council's recommendations will be sent to the Dean for approval. Letters will be sent notifying Department Chairs of the Dean's approval. Individual faculty members will be notified if the Dean's decision is a denial and will be advised of their rights to appeal using the process described in Section 2.17 of the [UAB Faculty Handbook](#).

The Dean then submits recommendations for approval of promotions and/or awards of tenure to the Provost. The Provost and/or President's Office provides notification to the Dean regarding approval of Schools of Medicine faculty promotion and/or tenure award proposals. Approved proposals are then forwarded to Personnel Records. Proposals denied at this level are returned to the Heersink SOM Dean's Office for appropriate action and/or follow-up as necessary. The President, Provost or Dean then notifies the Department Chairs and faculty regarding final approval of promotion and/or tenure award proposals.

6. Faculty Council for Tenure-track and Non-tenure Track

The Faculty Council will serve as the Heersink SOM Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee. In this capacity, the Faculty Council will make recommendations to the Dean on the merits of appointment, promotion, and tenure of individual Heersink SOM faculty members. The Faculty Council will review and approve/disapprove the initial appointment of all incoming faculty members of the Heersink SOM at the level of Associate Professor and Professor in the TE or NTE track and those faculty appointments that include the award of tenure. Additionally, the Faculty Council will review and approve/disapprove all applications for promotion to these same ranks in the TE and NTE tracks as well as applications for the award of tenure.

The Faculty Council shall consist of twenty-seven (27) faculty members with a part or full-time appointment to UAB. Nineteen (19) members are elected by the faculty and the Dean shall appoint eight (8) members. The Dean of Faculty Affairs will serve as an ex officio, non-voting member and provide guidance and oversight to the council. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure diversity and inclusion in membership of the Faculty Council. Department Chairs and faculty with Dean appointments may not serve as members. The Dean shall invite nominees for the elected positions and will construct a ballot of eligible faculty for distribution to and election by all UAB regular faculty members. The Faculty Council will recommend a Chair and Vice-Chair, who then must be appointed by the Dean. These individuals must have previously served as a regular member of the Faculty Council for at least one three-year term. This prior service may have occurred in an earlier appointment to the Faculty Council. The term of service for the Chair and Vice-Chair is three years. With the endorsement of the Faculty Council membership and the approval of the Dean, the Vice-Chair will become the Chair at the completion of the Chair's 3-year term, and then will serve one 3-year term as Chair. A new Vice-Chair then will be selected. The individual selected as the Vice-Chair should alternately be from a Joint Health Sciences and Clinical Department, so that the Chair is from a Clinical Department and the Vice-Chair is from a Joint Health Sciences department, or vice versa. Terms of appointment for Faculty Council members are three (3) years with one possible three (3) year renewal. The term of the Vice-Chair shall be extended so that they may serve one term as Chair. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Council to review each application applying the standards described previously.

Faculty Council members may vote on appointment, promotion, and tenure candidates as follows:

- Only tenured committee members, regardless of rank, may vote on initial appointments with tenure and awards of tenure.

- Only committee members at or above the rank to which the faculty member under consideration is to be appointed or promoted may vote on such actions.
- Committee members must recuse themselves from Faculty Council discussions or votes of any individual where the member has a conflict of interest.

7. Scholarship Defined

Heersink SOM has a multifaceted mission that includes providing healthcare, conducting research, applying new knowledge to improve healthcare and delivery, and educating healthcare providers, masters and doctoral level students, etc. This mission requires the commitment of a diverse faculty who are engaged in a full range of scholarly activities. As articulated in contemporary conceptualizations of scholarship, this range of activities includes the scholarship of discovery, application, teaching, and integration. The scholarship of discovery, teaching, and application relates directly to the Heersink SOM's major missions in research, teaching, and service. The scholarship of integration is related to all three areas and should be considered relative to contributions in the three primary areas.

While overlap may exist, a distinction exists between scholarly activity and scholarship. For example, delivering a good lecture in a medical school course is expected of a faculty member and is an example of scholarly activity. To qualify as scholarship in teaching, it is expected that the faculty member publicly disseminates the development of new courses, curriculum, and/or approach to teaching through publication or website posting. In service, a distinction can be made between one faculty member who provides competent clinical care and another who is viewed as an authority in a specific area of clinical medicine. Scholarly activity in research includes delivery of scientific presentation at regional, national, and international meetings or universities. Scholarship in research is achieved through peer reviewed publication of newly developed techniques, methods, or novel scientific discoveries. Application of the same method in support of the research mission of the Heersink SOM might be an example of scholarship in service if this method was judged by the faculty member's peers to be integrally important to the research mission.

Provided below is articulation of Scholarship at Heersink SOM, which is derived from an expanded view of scholarship set forth in Dr. Ernest L. Boyer's book *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Glassick, C.E., Huber, M.T., Maeroff, G.L., Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1997.). It is hoped that this statement will inform both the career development of faculty at Heersink SOM and the process of making decisions regarding appointments, promotion, and tenure. Boyer's expanded view of scholarship includes the following:

Scholarship of Discovery

“... the scholarship of discovery... comes closest to what is meant when academics speak of “research.” No tenets in the academy are held in higher regard than the commitment to knowledge for its own sake, to freedom in inquiry and to following, in a disciplined fashion, an investigation wherever it may lead... Scholarly investigation... is at the very heart of academic life, and the pursuit of knowledge must be assiduously cultivated and defended.”

Scholarship of Teaching

“When defined as scholarship... teaching both educates and entices future scholars. As a scholarly enterprise, teaching begins with what the teacher knows... Teaching is also a dynamic endeavor involving all the analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher’s understanding and the student’s learning... Further, good teaching means that faculty, as scholars are also learners... In the end, inspired teaching keeps the flame of scholarship alive... Without the teaching function, the continuity of knowledge will be broken and the store of human knowledge dangerously diminished.”

Scholarship of Application

“The third element, the application of knowledge, moves toward engagement as the scholar asks, ‘How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems? How can it be helpful to individuals as well as to institutions?’... To be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied directly to one’s special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity. Such service is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor – and the accountability – traditionally associated with research activities.”

Scholarship of Integration

“By integration, we mean making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non-specialists, too... Today, interdisciplinary and integrative studies, long on the edges of academic life, are moving toward the center, responding both to new intellectual questions and to pressing human problems. As the boundaries of human knowledge are being dramatically reshaped, the academy surely must give increased attention to the scholarship of integration.”