



Policy Directory

Responsible Division: Academic Affairs
Responsible Office: Graduate Studies
Issue/Revision Date: 12/01/2017

Policy Title: Graduate Faculty Appointment

Policy: *The Graduate School policy on Graduate Faculty Criteria and Appointment Process* contains the policies and regulations of the Alcorn State University Office of Graduate Studies. This policy has been established by the Graduate Council to ensure consistent standards across Graduate programs.

THE GRADUATE FACULTY SHALL BE CONSTITUTED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

The policies and procedures for credentialing graduate faculty have been established to provide continuity in adhering to appropriate professional standards for graduate faculty appointment, and to provide for routine monitoring of these standards by the Office of Graduate Studies and Graduate Council.

This document presents appropriate professional standards and guidelines to be used by Department Chairpersons in nominating members to the Graduate Faculty of Alcorn State University. It is also a tool to be used by the Office of Graduate Studies and Graduate Council to monitor implementation of these standards.

The purpose of graduate faculty criteria and credentialing is to ensure that graduate programs are supervised by faculty who are active in their own research/scholarship/creative activity. The faculty who teach graduate-level courses, advise graduate students, serve on thesis or research project committees, or otherwise participate in graduate education at Alcorn State University must be members of the graduate faculty. Graduate faculty appointment is open to persons who meet the appointment qualifications specified in this document. Once approved, graduate faculty status must be renewed every five or three years for full-time members and every year for members with Adjunct status.

The Dean of Graduate Studies/Graduate Studies Administrator will review nominations for appointment and submit names with attached documentation to the Graduate Council for approval.

All graduate faculty appointments are recommended by the department head, affirmed by the Dean of Graduate Studies/Graduate Studies Administrator and approved by the Graduate Council.

Graduate Faculty Eligibility

Faculty are eligible to apply for membership if the following criteria are met:

- Hold a regular Faculty Appointment (tenure or tenure-track) at Alcorn State University with the rank of Assistant Professor or higher and;
- Possess a terminal degree(Ph.D.) appropriate to the academic unit, or equivalent qualifications;
and

- Show evidence of continued research, publication, or work relevant to one's field, as recognized by colleagues inside and outside the university, and;
- Meet criteria for one of the three types of appointments: Full Member, Associate, Professional Affiliate.

Types of Appointments

Full Member

To hold and maintain a full member appointment, a faculty member must show evidence of ongoing professional activity. This evidence consists of one or more of the following activities:

- holds a terminal degree appropriate to the discipline
- must hold the title appointment of Full Professor or Associate Professor
- participate in or, upon certification of the Department Chair, will participate in graduate level instruction and advising
- provide evidence of strong research ability as demonstrated by scholarly publication or Creativity
- serve as principal advisor for a thesis committee
- engage in other appropriate scholarly and/or creative activities

Associate Member

All faculty who hold an appointment at the rank of assistant professor or above are eligible to apply to be Associate Members of the graduate faculty. However, in the event that there is no full member of the graduate faculty in a given department, then an associate member may be eligible for consideration. Associate members are appointed for a specific term and are evaluated during their promotion, tenure, and/or post-tenure reviews by the department chair and dean of the academic unit.

Criteria for Selection (must meet all criteria).

- newly appointed tenure track assistant Professor with 50% of teaching assignment in graduate credit
- hold at least a 50% appointment in an academic unit or department and teach graduate courses
- serve on a thesis committee but not as the principal advisor
- possess a record of research/scholarship/creative activities; however, consideration will be given to faculty who have recently earned their terminal degree (Ph.D.)

Professional Affiliate

On occasion it may be important to have someone who does not meet all criteria for Full Member or Associate Member credentialing to teach a specific graduate course or serve on a specific graduate committee. Such individuals may be given the status of Professional Affiliate which is a limited appointment for a specific committee appointment or graduate level course. A Professional Affiliate would typically be a lecturer, or adjunct faculty member. The criteria applied to Professional Affiliate is as follows:

- individual does not have appointment in an academic unit or program at Alcorn State University
- visiting scholar and or artist in residence
- must be nominated by the Department Chair for a specified period

The Nomination Process

Nominations to the graduate faculty begin at the academic unit level. Academic department chairs initiate the nomination process and must provide a detailed justification for each candidate, which must be endorsed by the respective unit dean. The criteria for the type of appointment should be strictly adhered to in recommending a faculty member or advising a faculty member interested in becoming a graduate faculty member. The level of scholarship, research and quality of the applicant's accomplishments activity should be the primary considerations for appointment to the Graduate Faculty. Each discipline or academic unit has the responsibility to provide the Graduate Council with an assessment of how each applicant fulfills the specific criteria for becoming a graduate faculty member.

Only tenured or tenure-track faculty members with the appropriate terminal degree at the assistant professor level or above are eligible for regular appointment. Additionally, regular members may be nominated to the Graduate Council.

Permission for Non-Graduate Faculty to Teach Graduate Courses at Alcorn State

In special cases, the Graduate School gives individuals who are not members of the Graduate Faculty at Alcorn State permission to teach graduate courses. The Department Chair or Academic Unit Dean submits these requests to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies. The Request for Non-Graduate Faculty to Teach Graduate Courses must include the proposed instructor's curriculum vitae. Approval by the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies is based on the proposed instructor's credentials being at least equivalent to those of members of the graduate faculty who ordinarily teach the course. The request should be submitted to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies at least 30 working days prior to the first day of the first term involved.

Length of Membership Appointment

Appointment of new members to graduate faculty is for an initial period of either five or three years. At the end of the five or three years, the member must be re-nominated and reviewed again. The qualifications of continuing graduate faculty members will be reviewed every five (5) or three (3) years. The intent here is to review the faculty member's recent scholarly productivity, going back as far as five (5) years in the case of more senior faculty and three (3) years in the case of less experienced faculty. A graduate faculty member who is being considered for continued appointment is expected to show evidence of ongoing creative activity since the last review.

Responsibilities and Privileges of Graduate Faculty

Members of graduate faculty, as indicated in the Graduate Studies Policy and Procedures Manual, can chair a graduate committee, direct master's thesis, teach 500-level and above courses, serve as representatives of the Dean of Graduate Studies, serve on educational specialists' exams. Members' service may deal with a specific subset of these responsibilities, relevant to a member's experience, as requested by the department head through the relevant academic dean.

Responsibilities and Privileges of Graduate Faculty members include:

- vote for faculty appointment on the Graduate Council and in graduate faculty referenda
- serve on the Graduate Council if elected by the Graduate Faculty within the respective academic unit or appointed by the Provost;
- vote within the academic unit on graduate program matters including awarding graduate degrees;
- teach graduate level courses for graduate credit;
- advise graduate students;

- serve on supervisory and examining committees for graduate students and other guidance and evaluation committees;
- direct master's theses
- and, with appropriate approval, serve as mentors and role models and advisers for other Scholarly projects.

Procedure for Applying for Appointment

An application for appointment on the graduate faculty originates with the faculty of an academic unit and is submitted to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies through the Dean or Department Chair of the unit. The Graduate Council reviews and takes action on each application. To apply for appointment, obtain an application from the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies, or download the application form on the Graduate Studies website. Submit applications to the Office of Graduate Studies, 1000 ASU Drive #689 Suite 519, fifth floor, Walter Washington Administration Building.

The following process will be used to apply for graduate faculty appointment:

1. Submit an application form for appointment and a full current vita to the academic unit department chair. Other supporting credentials may accompany the application.
2. The application must be voted on by at least three faculty in the department in which the graduate faculty appointment is being sought who hold the same or higher graduate faculty credentialing status as that being sought. If there are fewer than three qualified faculty, qualified faculty from a related department should be asked to review the application. The decision as to which faculty outside the department should participate must be a joint decision between the department chair and school dean. The vote of the reviewing faculty will be recorded on the candidate's application.

The department chair will make a recommendation to the academic dean, who will then submit a recommendation to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies. Application and supporting credentials should be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies administrator and signed by the Department Chair and Academic Unit Dean.

3. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies reviews the application and credentials and makes request for any additional credentials or documentation to support the application. The Graduate Council will be convened and all completed applications will be presented.
4. Final Decision
 - All appointment decisions will be approved by the Graduate Council and will become the final decision of this governing body.
 - Applications for Professional Affiliate as well as any application made on an emergency basis (e.g., need to make a last-minute substitution on a committee) may be made by the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies without review by the Graduate Council.

6. The Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies forwards decision of Graduate Council to the applicant and Academic Department Chair.

Processing of the Application

Once the application is received, the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies will check the application for completeness and adherence to Graduate Faculty Appointment criteria before submitting the applications to the Graduate Council for review of the applicant's credentials and make a decision regarding appointment.

Notification of Appointment

The decision of the appointment of an applicant will be communicated within three (3) business days following the decision of the Graduate Council. If the application is denied, the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies will forward comments concerning the denial to the Dean/Department Chair and the applicant. The applicant may present additional documentation to the Graduate Council for reconsideration of the application.

Renewal of Appointment

Appointment on the graduate faculty carries with it the responsibility for active participation in the graduate program and for maintaining the highest possible level of professional competence in the member's discipline. As a means of maintaining high standards, the Graduate Council requires all graduate faculty members to have their graduate credentials renewed every five (5) or three (3) years and in the case of Adjuncts, yearly if appropriate, starting from the date of their initial appointment or reappointment. Specific documentation will be attached to a renewal for membership. The renewal procedure will be initiated by the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies, who will ask each faculty member scheduled for review to prepare and present information pertinent to the review.

Documents:

- Faculty Evaluations
- Academic Course Evaluations by Students
- Professional accolades, appointments, publications, research

The final decision may be at one of the following levels:

- (1) reappointment to the current member category;
- (2) appointment to a higher or lower member category,
- (3) reappointment to a two-year probationary period at the current member level which will serve as a warning that teaching performance/research/scholarship/creative activity must be increased within the following two-year period or membership on the graduate faculty may be withdrawn.

; or

- (4) non-reappointment as a member of the graduate faculty; non-reappointment will be for a period of two years, at the end of which the faculty member may re-apply for Graduate Faculty membership.

Removal of Graduate Faculty Members

The removal of a graduate faculty member may be initiated by the Department Chair, Dean of the Academic Unit or Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies. Documents referencing the same will be submitted to the Graduate Council for its consideration and vote.

Appeals

Only full faculty members have access to the graduate-faculty appointment appeal process. Should the faculty member wish to appeal the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies' decision, he/she may do so by submitting a written appeal to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Program Support within 30 days of the notice of the decision.

Graduate Dean Responsibility

Any exception to the above policy must be approved in writing by the Graduate Council. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact the Assistant Vice President for Academic Program Support and Graduate Studies or email the Graduate School. Applications are reviewed to determine if the faculty member has met qualifications, as determined by the academic unit before applications are submitted to the Graduate Council for confirmation.