Tenure Track Appointments Policy

1. POLICY

This policy applies to tenure-track appointments, which are appointments at the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Instructor. It does not apply to any other academic appointment. This policy defines the term of tenure-track appointments, the schedule for consideration for contract renewal, tenure and promotion, and the notice faculty members will receive when tenure is not granted or when a further appointment is not offered.

2. TENURE-TRACK APPOINTMENTS

2.1 When the Board of Governors approves a tenure-track appointment, the President shall inform the appointee in writing of the terms and conditions of his/her appointment, including rank, salary, duration of appointment, nature of services expected and, where applicable, length of time before consideration for contract renewal or tenure.

2.2 A tenure-track appointment provides a period of mutual appraisal for the University and the faculty member. It does not imply inevitable appointment with tenure. Consideration for contract renewal and tenure will be according to the schedule set out in paragraph 2.6. There is also the possibility of earlier tenure consideration in exceptional circumstances. A faculty member shall receive only one consideration for tenure.

2.3 The standard length of contract for Professors and Associate Professors is five years. For Assistant Professors, it is four years with a subsequent contract for three years, if offered.

2.4 The rank of Instructor applies to tenure-track appointments where the faculty member is appointed prior to, but contingent on the completion of the Ph.D. or equivalent. The standard length of contract for Instructors is four years. If the Ph.D. is not completed by the end of the third year, the contract will not normally be renewed. In exceptional circumstances, however, an additional one-year contract may be offered.

2.5 Appointments in all ranks are normally made effective September 1st of any year. Where effective appointment dates differ from September 1st, the letter of appointment shall specify the September 1st that is applicable for consideration for contract renewal and/or tenure. For appointments commencing prior to March 1 in any given year, the September 1st of the previous year will be applicable; for appointments commencing between March 1 and August 31, the following September 1st will be applicable.

2.6 The schedule for consideration for contract renewal and tenure is as set out below.

   a. Professors and Associate Professors. Consideration for tenure shall, except in accordance with section 2.7 below, occur no later than the fourth year of the appointment.

   b. Assistant Professors. Consideration for renewal of the contract for an additional three-year term shall occur in the third year of the initial appointment.

   c. Assistant Professors. Consideration for tenure shall, except in accordance with section 2.7 below, occur no later than the sixth year of appointment.

   d. An Assistant Professor must apply for promotion to Associate Professor at the same time as s/he is considered for tenure. Accordingly, references to “tenure” in the A11 Policies should be read to include promotion to Associate Professor where the candidate is an Assistant Professor.
2.7 Schedule Modifications

2.7.1 Tenure-track faculty members who have been on medical or parental leave from Simon Fraser University for four months or longer will be notified by the Office of the Vice President, Academic that they may request a contract extension and, where applicable, a delay in tenure consideration for one year.

b. Tenure-track faculty members who have experienced other severely disruptive personal circumstances during the period of appointment at Simon Fraser University, may apply for a contract extension and, where applicable, a delay in tenure consideration for one year.

c. Up to two such extensions/delays in tenure may be granted. The request is to be forwarded with recommendations by the Department Chair and Dean to the Vice-President, Academic whose decision shall be final.

2.7.2 Tenure-track faculty members on long-term disability may have the schedules for contract renewal and tenure suspended or modified by the Vice President, Academic.

2.8 Termination of Contract

Where a faculty member’s contract is not renewed or he/she is not granted tenure, the faculty member shall be sent written notice at least one year prior to the expiry date of his/her contract. Failure to give timely notice shall not have the effect of extending or renewing an appointment. In the event of failure to give timely notice, the faculty member shall receive salary from the expiry date of his/her contract to the anniversary date of the sending of the notice. However, if the notice is sent after November 15th the faculty member shall have the right, as long as he/she continues to carry out his/her normal responsibilities until the second July 1st following the sending of the notice, to receive salary until the second July 1st following the sending of the notice.

2.9 Degree Candidates

A person who is a candidate for a degree at Simon Fraser University may not be appointed as an Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Professor, in a department directly associated with the degree sought, until the degree requirements have been fulfilled.

3. TENURE CONSIDERATION

3.1 A scheduled tenure consideration commences with written notice from the Chair to the faculty member by May 1 of the academic year prior to the year indicated in the letter of appointment e.g. May 1 of the 5th year of appointment of an Assistant Professor. This notice should ask the faculty member to submit an application and a full curriculum vitae on or before May 15.

3.2 Early Tenure Consideration

3.2.1 A faculty member may apply to be considered for tenure prior to the time specified in his/her letter of appointment if one of the following conditions apply:

a. Is an Associate Professor or Professor with prior experience as a faculty member at another University and has at least one year of experience at Simon Fraser University;

b. Is an Assistant Professor who has at least two years of experience as a tenure track faculty member at Simon Fraser University and a minimum of five years has elapsed since the candidate obtained a PhD or equivalent;

c. Is an Assistant Professor who has at least three years as a full-time limited term faculty member immediately prior to the tenure-track appointment and at least one year in a tenure-track position, both at SFU.
3.2.2 He/she must make a written submission, including a full curriculum vitae, to the Dean (copied to the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee) by April 15 outlining the reasons for the request.

3.2.3. In considering the request for early tenure consideration, the Dean must consult with the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee. The Dean must inform the faculty member and the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee in writing by May 1 whether the request is approved or rejected, with reasons. In a tenure consideration, the refusal of the Dean to approve an early tenure request shall not be a relevant consideration.

3.2.4 Where the Dean approves a request for early consideration and if tenure is not granted, the faculty member's appointment will end after one year's notice. If the final decision is delayed, the extended notice provisions contained in paragraph 2.8 of this policy shall apply.

4. WITHDRAWAL FROM CONSIDERATION

Consideration for renewal and tenure is mandatory. Also, once the Dean has approved an early tenure consideration, withdrawal from the tenure consideration is not permitted.

5. DOCUMENTATION

A faculty member who is to be considered for renewal or tenure shall provide the Tenure and Promotion Committee with the following documentation:

   a. copies of at least three examples of his/her published research that the faculty member wishes to be given to the external referees, by May 30;

   b. all material relating to his/her performance in the areas of teaching, research, and service which he/she wishes the Tenure and Promotion Committee to consider, by September 15.

6. EXTERNAL REFEREES

   6.1 The evaluation of a faculty member’s scholarly work by external referees with appropriate expertise should inform the assessment made by the Tenure and Promotion Committee. The Committee should take account of the academic stature and the independence of each referee in weighing the assessment.

   6.2 The Tenure and Promotion Committee must provide the faculty member with a list of at least four suggested external referees by May 30.

   6.3 Having considered the suggestions of the Committee, the faculty member must submit a rank-ordered list of eight referees to the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee by June 15. Those referees should normally be at arm’s length from the candidate, that is they should not have been a recent thesis supervisor, co-author or personal friend of the faculty member. The practice of soliciting letters of reference from faculty members at S.F.U., including retired faculty members, or other members of the University community is not acceptable.

   6.4 The Tenure and Promotion Committee may comment on the suitability of the faculty member’s rank-ordered list but has no power of veto. The faculty member may modify his/her list as a result of the feedback from the Committee. The faculty member must finalize the rank-ordered list by June 30.

   6.5 The Committee must request letters of reference from six referees on the faculty member’s list by rank order using a template letter and guidelines for external referees that have been approved by the Department and the Dean. A sample is found in Appendix II. There must be a minimum of five referees’ reports received before the case can be considered. These reports are to be written; telephone references must be followed by a written report from each referee.


**INTERPRETATION**

Section 14.1 of the Faculty Association Framework Agreement deals with matters of interpretation of this Policy.

**APPENDIX I**

**DEFINITION OF TENURE**

The granting of "tenure" to a faculty member is the provision in the employment contract between the University and the faculty member of a term that the duration of the contract is for an indefinite period and that a faculty member may terminate the contract in the following manner:

1. resignation,
2. repudiation, or
3. retirement,

and that the University may terminate the contract in the following circumstances:

1. for cause, which shall include but not be limited to misconduct or persistent neglect of duties;
2. inability of the faculty member to perform duties for medical or other reasons of a like nature;
3. discontinuance of a department or program of instruction;
4. financial exigencies.

The Board of Governors acknowledges that adoption of the above definition of tenure requires subsequent adoption of subsidiary policies and procedures. Any such policies and procedures shall include recognition of the following principles:

1. Repudiation of contract is a legal concept and no contract will be terminated in this way without the opinion of legal counsel.
2. Senate is presently considering proposed procedures for dealing with faculty self-discipline. The procedures envisage a range of sanctions, including discharge, and it is expected that recommendations for termination for cause, which shall include but not be limited to misconduct or persistent neglect of duties, would originate through such procedures.
3. The University Act requires that both Senate and Board concur before a department or program of instruction is discontinued. It is understood that suitable alternative employment within the University would be sought for a faculty member displaced by any such discontinuance. A faculty member terminated in this way shall be given an opportunity to accept any suitable position created by the University within three years of the concurrence of Board and Senate.
4. Procedures that might lead to the termination of a faculty member's contract because of financial exigencies do not yet exist. The statutory requirement that no contract may be terminated by the Board except upon the President's recommendation remains applicable in such circumstances. A faculty member terminated for these reasons shall be given an opportunity to accept any suitable position created by the University within three years of his termination.
APPENDIX II

SAMPLE

EXTERNAL REFEREE TEMPLATE LETTER

1. For tenure-track faculty being considered for tenure in 2003-04

Dear [External Referee]:

[Candidate] a [rank] in the [department] at Simon Fraser University is being considered for tenure and/or promotion to [rank].

In making a recommendation as to [candidate’s] suitability for tenure and/or promotion, the Tenure and Promotion Committee looks to external referees to provide an objective assessment of the faculty member’s scholarly achievements to assist them in making a decision.

I have attached the following documents:

• a copy of the guidelines that we ask external referees to follow
• a copy of [candidate’s] curriculum vitae
• copies of at least three examples of [candidate’s] work, selected by the candidate

The Tenure and Promotion Committee would greatly appreciate receiving your evaluation of [candidate’s] scholarship by [date]. Please advise me at your earliest convenience if you are unable to provide an evaluation.

2. For tenure-track faculty hired before March 1, 2003

Dear [External Referee]:

[Candidate] a [rank] in the [department] at Simon Fraser University is being considered for tenure and/or promotion to [rank].

In making a recommendation as to [candidate’s] suitability for tenure and/or promotion, the Tenure and Promotion Committee looks to external referees to provide an objective assessment of the faculty member’s scholarly achievements to assist them in making a decision.

I have attached the following documents:

• a copy of the guidelines that we ask external referees to follow
• a copy of [candidate’s] curriculum vitae
• copies of at least three examples of [candidate’s] work, selected by the candidate
• a copy of relevant University and departmental criteria for scholarly activity.

The Tenure and Promotion Committee would greatly appreciate receiving your evaluation of [candidate’s] scholarship by [date]. Please advise me at your earliest convenience if you are unable to provide an evaluation.

3. For tenure-track faculty hired after March 1, 2003

Dear [External Referee]:

[Candidate] a [rank] in the [department] at Simon Fraser University is being considered for tenure and/or promotion to [rank]. At Simon Fraser University, tenure without promotion to associate professor is not possible.

In making a recommendation as to [candidate’s] suitability for tenure and/or promotion, the Tenure and Promotion Committee looks to external referees to provide an objective assessment of the faculty member’s scholarly achievements to assist them in making a decision.

I have attached the following documents:
• a copy of the guidelines that we ask external referees to follow
• a copy of [candidate’s] curriculum vitae
• copies of at least three examples of [candidate’s] work, selected by the candidate
• a copy of relevant University and departmental criteria for scholarly activity.

The Tenure and Promotion Committee would greatly appreciate receiving your evaluation of [candidate’s] scholarship by [date]. Please advise me at your earliest convenience if you are unable to provide an evaluation.

GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL REFEREES IN TENURE AND PROMOTION CASES

1. The role of an external referee is to provide the Tenure and Promotion Committee with an objective assessment of the faculty member’s scholarly achievements to assist the Committee in evaluating his/her scholarly performance.

2. Under provincial law and University policy, the faculty member will be provided with a version of your assessment that has been edited to protect your identity. For this reason, it would be helpful if you could provide your evaluation on a separate sheet from your covering letter, rather than on letterhead.

3. In preparing your assessment of the candidate’s work we ask you to respond as fully as possible to each of the following items. This level of information will be extremely useful in informing the recommendations of the Tenure and Promotion Committee.

   a. Describe the extent to which you are familiar with the candidate's work and how well you know the candidate.
   b. Describe your view of the originality and creativity of the candidate's work.
   c. Assess the candidate's work in terms of the quality and importance of its contribution to the candidate’s specific area of expertise and his/her subject generally. Which work is most important and why?
   d. Provide an assessment of the extent to which you believe the candidate's work has the potential for further development.
   e. Describe any other contribution you are aware the candidate has made to the development of his/her academic discipline.