

## 12.99.99.R0.12 Graduate Faculty Membership

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### Procedure Summary

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Faculty teaching graduate courses and advising graduate students must have the qualifications and skills necessary to ensure that students enrolled at Texas A&M University-Commerce receive a quality graduate education. This procedure establishes qualifications for graduate faculty membership, a process for awarding graduate faculty membership, and a process for periodic review of graduate faculty membership and termination of such membership where warranted.

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### Procedures and Responsibilities

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#### 1 GRADUATE FACULTY MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Graduate Faculty Member. A Graduate Faculty Member means a faculty member at A&M-Commerce who is found to meet the qualifications for graduate faculty membership as set forth in Section 2. A Graduate Faculty Member shall be eligible to: (a) teach graduate courses in their discipline, (b) serve on thesis and doctoral dissertation committees, and (c) direct master's/specialist theses and doctoral dissertations in the member's discipline or a closely-related field; however, these activities may be limited or restricted in accordance with Section 3.4.
- 1.2 Visiting Member. A Visiting Member shall be eligible to teach graduate courses, serve on thesis and doctoral dissertation committees, and direct master's/specialist theses and doctoral dissertations in the member's discipline or a closely-related field. Visiting members are tenure-track or tenured faculty members employed by another institution, but appointed to teach at A&M-Commerce for a limited time period, such as one semester or one year.

#### 2 QUALIFICATIONS FOR GRADUATE FACULTY MEMBERSHIP

##### 2.1 Graduate Faculty Member and Visiting Member

- 2.1.1 Possession of a terminal degree in the member's discipline or a closely-related field (customarily this is a doctoral degree); or possession of the equivalent-level degree in the discipline being taught or closely-related field (e.g. formal training); and use of the following qualifications which must be directly related to the course content, at least 5 years of work experience; and/or significant professional, research, or teaching experience; and/or significant refereed, discipline-specific or related research/scholarly activity; and/or discipline-specific licensure or certification;

and/or as approved by a national, discipline-specific accreditor; and

2.1.2 Employed as tenured, tenure-track, or non-tenure track faculty with rank of assistant professor or above, or rank of assistant professional track faculty or above; and

2.1.3 Demonstrated competence as a scholar, including research capabilities and/or creative activities, as evidenced by publications and creative endeavors.

### 3 APPOINTMENT TO GRADUATE FACULTY MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Initiating Requests. Requests for either type of graduate faculty membership should be initiated by the faculty member. The application form is available online. <https://inside.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/graduateFaculty.aspx>

3.2 Selection of Graduate Faculty. All requests will initially go to the department head who will call a meeting of the graduate faculty of the department to review the application and make a recommendation. The recommendation of the department head and the graduate faculty members will be forwarded through the college dean and Dean of the Graduate School, all of whom will make recommendations to the appropriate Graduate Council subcommittee. All recommendations will be made available to the Graduate Council, who will make the decision as to the type of membership, if any, that will be granted. Any appeal of the Council decision will be made directly to the Graduate Council.

3.3 Limitation on Membership.

3.3.1 During the selection process, the college dean, Dean of the Graduate School, and the Graduate Council may request to restrict the activities that a graduate faculty member may perform. Such requests will be based on the candidate's credentials, demonstrated lack of experience in teaching graduate courses or directing graduate students through the thesis/dissertation process. The Graduate Council will decide whether to restrict a candidate's graduate faculty activities. Any appeal of the Council decision will be made directly to the Graduate Council.

3.3.2 While any graduate faculty member is serving in an administrative capacity for the university, they are not permitted to direct or to serve on any thesis or dissertation committee, unless they are able to demonstrate extraordinary circumstances for why they must serve on such a committee.

3.4 Temporary Membership.

3.4.1 From time to time, circumstances may warrant that a faculty member receive temporary membership as graduate faculty. Requests for temporary graduate faculty status to teach graduate courses and/or serve on thesis or dissertation committees by non-graduate faculty members will originate with the faculty member. Additional information may be required to justify the qualifications of the faculty member. The request will then be forwarded to the dean of the applicant's college and to the Dean of the Graduate School who will use discretion in approving temporary appointments. This information will be submitted to the Graduate Council but will not require Council action.

The Dean of the Graduate School will keep on file the temporary applicant's academic training and expertise as well as courses approved to teach and/or committee service. Temporary graduate faculty membership is effective for three years.

3.4.2 In some circumstances, it may be reasonable and justified for an adjunct faculty member or a member of the community to serve on a thesis or dissertation committee. Such person will need to meet the same credentialing requirements as full-time graduate faculty. If the person meets these criteria, they may receive a temporary membership as graduate faculty for the limited purpose of serving on the applicable student's thesis or dissertation committee, and the membership is effective for three years or until the student successfully defends their thesis or dissertation, whichever occurs sooner.

3.4.3 Department heads may submit for temporary membership as part of the hiring packet.

3.5 Training. The university values ensuring its faculty are prepared to fulfill the expectations of teaching and guiding graduate students in their education. If a faculty member is granted graduate faculty membership and has not demonstrated a history of mentoring graduate students through their thesis or dissertation, the faculty member will need to fulfill certain training as may be determined by the Dean of the Graduate School.

3.6 Determination of Scope of Field. Academic disciplines evolve and what is deemed to be a "closely-related field" can change over time. Any person at the university may ask the Dean of the Graduate School to determine whether a faculty member is qualified to teach a graduate course or direct a thesis or dissertation. A faculty member may submit such information or materials to the Dean of the Graduate School to demonstrate proficiency and background sufficient to teach the course or direct the thesis or dissertation. The Dean of the Graduate School will have the authority to approve or deny the faculty member performing such activity.

#### 4 REVIEW OF GRADUATE FACULTY MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Each graduate faculty member's scholarly research, creative activity, and involvement in the discipline and graduate education will be reviewed by the Graduate Council every six years. The purpose of such review is to determine if the faculty member's current graduate faculty status is appropriate and warranted.

4.2 Any years during a full-time administrative appointment shall not be counted as part of the six-year period subject to review. Graduate faculty members who serve in a full-time administrative appointment shall retain their graduate faculty membership during such appointment; however, if they return to a full-time faculty appointment six years or more after beginning their administrative appointment, their graduate faculty membership shall be reviewed in accordance with the process in Section 4.3.

4.3 The review process shall be the same as for the initial selection process (Section 3.2 above); however, the options open to the Graduate Council are more numerous and include:

- 4.3.1 Approve continued membership in the current status for six years,
- 4.3.2 Refuse to approve as graduate faculty, or
- 4.3.3 Provide a three-year provisional term as graduate faculty.

If the membership under Section 4.3.3 is chosen, the faculty member must be reviewed again after three years and either approved for a regular six-year membership or dropped from graduate faculty membership. Graduate Faculty Members whose status is terminated may, after one calendar year, reapply for graduate faculty membership.

- 4.4 Graduate Faculty Members who do not submit for the six-year review, will have their membership terminated.

## 5 TERMINATION OF GRADUATE FACULTY MEMBERSHIP

Graduate faculty membership may be terminated at any time if the faculty member has been negligent and/or ineffective in the performance of his or her responsibilities (without warranting dismissal for Good Cause as set forth in University Procedure 12.01.99.R1). In such cases, termination of graduate faculty membership will be initiated by the Dean of the Graduate School either independently or upon recommendation of the faculty member's department head or academic dean.

- 5.1 The process used to consider termination of graduate faculty membership shall be overseen by the Dean of the Graduate School.
  - 5.1.1 The Dean of the Graduate School will gather supporting evidence and rationale for termination of the membership and submit these materials to the faculty member under review and to the Graduate Council.
  - 5.1.2 The faculty member may elect to provide supporting evidence against termination of the membership. If so, he or she will have two weeks to do so from the time of notification from the Dean of the Graduate School. The faculty member's supporting documentation will be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School who will then forward that documentation to the appropriate Graduate Council subcommittee.
  - 5.1.3 Once all materials have been received, the Graduate Council subcommittee will have two weeks to deliberate and develop a recommendation. The subcommittee will present the evidence and their recommendation to the Graduate Council and the Graduate Council will vote on its recommendation.
  - 5.1.4 The Dean of the Graduate School will inform the faculty member of the recommendation of the Graduate Council and will pass this recommendation and supporting documentation on to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs who will make the final decision regarding termination of the graduate faculty membership.

- 5.2 The decision to terminate the graduate faculty membership, once made by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, may be appealed as outlined in University Procedure *32.01.01.R0.01 Grievance and Appeal Process for Faculty Members*.
- 5.3 A faculty member who has had graduate faculty membership terminated can apply for reinstatement of graduate faculty membership two years after the initial decision by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs provided that the faculty member is in good standing with the University.

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## **Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements**

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University Rule [\*12.01.99.R1 Academic Freedom and Responsibility\*](#)

Suspends University Procedure *12.04.99.R0.02 Graduate Faculty Membership*

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## **Contact Office**

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The Graduate School  
903-886-5163  
[Graduate.School@tamuc.edu](mailto:Graduate.School@tamuc.edu)