

Columbia University
School of Engineering and Applied Science

Review of Professors of Professional Practice

Adopted by SEAS Executive Committee on May 1st, 2017

Revised on July 2nd, 2017

Professors of Professional Practice are members of the faculty of the School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) who have substantial professional expertise. They allow the School to fulfill programmatic and curricular needs that are clearly distinguishable from the responsibilities of the regular professorial faculty. Practice faculty are appointed full-time for a stated term at the rank of assistant, associate, or professor of professional practice. The professional qualifications of each correspond to those of the comparable grade in the tenured or tenure-track faculty. Members of the practice faculty are not subject to the statutory limits on full-time non-tenured service. However, they ordinarily may be appointed for more than six years only if they have successfully passed a major review that is conducted by the end of the fifth year. Practice appointments are made for a stated term, which is renewable, and the incumbents of these appointments may not receive tenure while they hold practice titles. Ordinarily, faculty may not switch from practice to non-practice appointments or the reverse. Exceptions require the special permission of the Provost. (For more details, please see *Columbia University Faculty Handbook* <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/handbook/>).

The rank of assistant is appropriate for individuals holding a doctorate or its professional equivalent who are beginning a career in professional practice.

The rank of associate is appropriate for individuals holding a doctorate or its professional equivalent who have demonstrated achievement in professional practice and show great promise of attaining distinction in their fields of specialization.

The rank of professor is appropriate for individuals holding a doctorate or its professional equivalent who are widely recognized for their distinction.

Statutory Terms for Appointment to Modified Practice Title

By University Statute, all initial appointments to a non-tenured rank are for one year only. Subsequent appointments may be for a term of one, two, or three years. Passage of the major review and subsequent continuing reviews carry the opportunity for reappointment for a term of up to five years.

The University may choose not to renew an appointment beyond its stated term because of budgetary considerations, changes in staffing needs, or less than optimal performance on the part of the candidate. In such cases, following a resolution adopted by the Senate on February 5th, 2016, the University must give written notice to the candidate according to the following schedule:

- 1) not later than March 1 before the end of the first year of service;
- 2) not later than December 15 before the end of the second year of service;
- 3) for faculty with up to six years of service, at least twelve months before the end of the stated term of their appointment;
- 4) for faculty entering their seventh year of service, by May 31 of year six;
- 5) for faculty with more than seven but fewer than twelve years of service, at least 18 months prior to the end of the stated term of their appointment.
- 6) for faculty with 12 or more years of service, at least 24 months prior to the end of the stated term of their appointment.

Years of service are measured as years of service on full-time, multi-year appointments, and do not include service on adjunct (part-time) or one-year full-time appointments.

Procedures for Review

The procedures for reviews for practice faculty are as follows. For simplicity, the year stipulated refers to the number of years of counted service. The following review schedule may be accelerated by mutual consent of the Dean and the faculty member undergoing review.

1. Confirming Review (First Year)

The first year of service at Columbia for all full-time faculty members of Professional Practice, regardless of rank, serves as a probationary period and a decision must be made whether or not to extend the statutory initial appointment. Reviews in the first year of service are essentially confirming reviews and are conducted by the review committee organized by the Chair. Those who successfully complete the probationary period may be extended through the fifth year, during which the Major Review is conducted. Those who do not are notified by the Dean in writing by March 1 that their appointment will not be renewed beyond June 30.

2. Major Review (Fifth Year after Initial Appointment)

This review evaluates whether or not a candidate has become a leading figure in a field that is vital and important to the School and the University. The process of major review, therefore, is concerned both with the state and objectives of the School and with the qualities of the nominee.

No later than the end of the fifth year of counted appointment, members of the practice faculty undergo a Major Review whose outcome is either an offer of a up to five-year renewal appointment or written notice of nonrenewal after a sixth and terminal year of appointment. No faculty member may hold a practice appointment for more than six counted years of service without successfully passing the Major Review. The School is under no obligation to conduct a major review, and the passage of major review is approved only if an individual of widely recognized excellence is found to fill a scholarly and programmatic need that is demonstrably vital to a discipline and central to the University's purposes. The decision whether a successful

major review appointment in the candidate's field meets the School's scholarly/programmatic needs is customarily made by the Executive Committee in the fourth year; the review of the candidate's qualifications begins only after a positive decision is made on this issue. Those recommended for passage of major review by the School must be outstanding practitioners who have demonstrated a proven capacity for the highest effectiveness as a teacher, the capacity for imaginative and original work and who are making and show promise of continuing to make significant contributions in vital fields of knowledge or the learned professions.

Those who will not be put up for major review during their fifth year must receive written notification by at least twelve months before the end of the stated term of their appointment.

Those who have had four or more years of continued service by the time this policy is adopted will have their Major Review deadline extended until one year after adoption of the policy.

The Major Review includes the following steps:

Candidate's Statement. The candidate should submit a complete, up-to-date curriculum vitae, as well as a full statement of professional, teaching and service accomplishments, current activities and future plans. The statement also should include a summary of achievements related to industry.

Evaluation of Candidates.

Letters of evaluation (6-8) are solicited by the School from recognized experts in the candidate's specialization. Letters are expected to be from external experts, but in special cases, may be from internal experts affiliated with other departments who have close knowledge about the field. The referees are asked to assess the candidate's qualifications, accomplishments and the recognition as a leader in the field of the candidate. Based on its assessment of the candidate's credentials and informed by the letters, the Executive Committee of the department should make a specific recommendation regarding passage of the major review. The committee's recommendation should be framed in a written report to the Dean. The report should discuss the candidate's strengths as a scholar and practitioner, including a detailed assessment of his or her principal contributions to the appropriate field of study and practice, and comment on the candidate's standing in this field. The report should contain a detailed analysis of teaching performance, including a discussion of courses taught, involvement in the Department's and School's curriculum and teaching requirements, enrollments, student and peer evaluations, advising, student supervision, and other activities related to academic program management. Finally, it should also address where the candidate fits within the overall context of the School and its academic mission.

The Senior Executive Vice Dean will appoint a school-level ad hoc committee consisting of three senior faculty members. The members of the ad hoc committee are responsible for reading the candidate's dossier and all materials. The ad hoc committee may request additional information from the department or seek information on its own to form the basis of its assessment of the department's recommendation. The ad hoc committee will report in writing on its recommendation and vote, whether positive or negative to the Dean.

Once the ad hoc committee has voted to recommend successful passage of major review and/or promotion to professor of professional practice, the Dean will make the final decision based on the candidate's dossier and the impact of the decision on the academic mission of the institution. The Dean will then notify the faculty member in writing about the outcome of the review.

Successful passage of the Major Review provides the opportunities of a renewal appointment of up to five years and promotion to a higher appointment rank of professional practice (e.g., Associate Professor or Professor of Professional Practice).

Reasons for non-renewal may be based upon, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Evidence of continuous and on-going poor performance in the classroom.
- b. Failure to maintain an active professional involvement at a high level of excellence as evidenced by the review.
- c. A shift in the ongoing and future goals, needs, specializations, and practices of the School's curriculum that cannot be adequately met or fulfilled by the faculty member.

3. Subsequent Renewals and Title Change

After successfully passing the major review, a faculty member of professional practice will be eligible for multiple renewable contracts of up to five years in each renewal, subject to an appropriate review, to be conducted no later than the fifth year after the previous review. The Chair will appoint a three-person review committee to conduct a review and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee of the department. All committee members will be tenured or have passed the major review.

The candidate should submit a complete, up-to-date curriculum vitae, as well as a full statement of professional, teaching and service accomplishments, current activities and future plans. The statement should document work during the period since the passage of the previous review. The statement also should include a summary of achievements related to industry.

The review committee will consider the candidate's ongoing professional work; teaching; and contributions to the School and the University at large. It may obtain outside letters of reference and make inquiries of experts in the field; however, it is not required to do so. Upon completion of its review, the committee will prepare a written assessment of the faculty member and make a recommendation on reappointment. The recommendation on reappointment is forwarded to the Executive Committee for consideration and vote. The results of the Executive Committee decision are forwarded to the Dean, who makes the final decision about renewal. The Dean informs the candidate in writing of the results of the reviews.

For promotion with title change to Associate Professor of Professional Practice or Professor of Professional Practice, the procedure follows the same for Major Review. Typically, the counted years of service should be at least five years after the Major Review before a request for promotion to Professor of Professional Practice is considered.

(Revised July 2nd, 2017)

Faculty whose initial appointment is at the rank of Associate Professor of Professional Practice or Professor of Professional Practice with initial term are reviewed on a different schedule. All receive a first-year Confirming Review. Those on appointments eligible for the major professional practice review undergo this review in the third year of the appointment. These reviews follow the same procedures as the major professional practice review, which is described in more detail below.