ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	ACAF Academic Affairs
POLICY NUMBER	ACAF 1.00
POLICY TITLE	Recruitment and Appointment of Tenured, Tenure-track, and Professional-track Faculty
SCOPE OF POLICY	USC System
DATE OF REVISION	March 2, 2026
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE	Office of the Provost

PURPOSE

This policy addresses the advertisement, recruitment, and appointment of all tenured and tenure-track faculty positions including librarians and all professional-track faculty positions.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Faculty: University personnel who are engaged in research, instruction both inside and outside the classroom, service and/or administration. Faculty can be further classified as having tenure-track, professional-track, or honorific appointments.

Hiring Authority - the individual who decides which candidate to hire and who is responsible for ensuring a fair and open search for a particular faculty position in accordance with this and other university policies

Chief Academic Officer - the individual who directs and oversees the academic program of a university or college

POLICY STATEMENT

The University of South Carolina is committed to recruiting, retaining, and promoting outstanding faculty who demonstrate excellence in teaching, research, service, and outreach. The university believes that the presence of a high-quality community of scholars is necessary to achieve such excellence. To that end, the hiring practices adopted by the university are designed to seek out and welcome quality and diversity to its faculty ranks through search processes that are conducted in a fair and open manner.

These practices are in compliance with all pertinent state and federal laws that require adherence to equal opportunity and affirmative action provisions, and with all requirements of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

For searches for faculty with a concurrent academic administrator appointment, see also ACAF 1.01 Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Administrators. For searches for a named professorship, endowed chair, or fixed term chair, see policy ACAF 1.21 Appointment and Review of Endowed Chairs and Named Professorships.

A. Academic Leadership Responsibility: Required Approvals

1. The term “chief academic officer" is used throughout this policy and defined for each campus as follows:

   a. For Columbia, the chief academic officer is the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost.

   b. For the regional Palmetto Colleges, the chief academic officer is the chancellor for Palmetto College unless otherwise specified by the chancellor.

   c. For the other comprehensive universities, the chief academic officer is the executive or senior vice chancellor for academic affairs unless otherwise specified by the chancellor.

2. The hiring authority must be identified prior to the initiation of recruitment for a faculty position at any level and named in the official search record.

3. A documented search process is required for all academic positions. The hiring authority will determine the scope and structure of the search process prior to the initiation of a search, in consultation with the next highest administrative office when appropriate.

4. Approval for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Searches

   a. The hiring process for the tenure-track faculty positions must follow the process outlined in this policy and adhere to the guidelines contained in policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions.

   b. The written approval of the appropriate chief academic officer is required prior to initiating a search for any tenured or tenure-track faculty position.

   c. The approval of the hiring authority is required for all advertisements prior to listing in any written or electronic publication. For the Columbia campus, searches must be nationally posted for a minimum of 45 calendar days and include a search committee.

   d. The written approval of the president is required before an offer can be extended for a hire with tenure and/or for a position at the rank of professor.

      For a hire with tenure, offer letters must state that tenure is contingent on the approval of the Board of Trustees.

5. Approval for Professional-Track Faculty Searches

   a. The hiring process for professional-track faculty positions must follow the process outlined in this policy and adhere to the guidelines contained in policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions. For USC Columbia, the process must also adhere to policy ACAF 1.16 Professional-Track Faculty.

b. The approval of the hiring authority is required at each stage of the process.

c. The hiring authority determines the scope of a search, including whether a search committee will be used. However, searches for new and replacement professional-track faculty members must be advertised no less than five working days and preferably for ten calendar days. On the Columbia campus, searches for new and replacement professional-track faculty members must include a search committee and be posted nationally for a minimum of 45 calendar days. See also policy section A.3 above.

d. For the Columbia campus, the written approval of the president is required before an offer can be extended for the position of clinical professor, research professor, or professor of practice.

e. Reappointment of the same person to the same position does not require an advertised search.

f. When an emergency situation exists and a position must be filled immediately for continued operations and cannot wait for five working days for the position to be filled, a temporary faculty member may be hired in the position for up to one year. If the position needs to be filled for additional time after the initial emergency time period, then a documented search, including advertisement, must be conducted. For the Columbia campus, such a search must be nationally posted for a minimum of 45 calendar days and include a search committee.

6. Appointments to tenured, tenure-track and professional-track faculty positions at the university may be awarded by a hiring authority. All faculty positions must have an appointment in a campus, college or school regardless of the position's organizational home.

   a. For Columbia, the hiring authority for faculty positions is the college/school dean unless otherwise specified by the provost. The dean may delegate this responsibility or specific aspects of this responsibility in writing.

   b. On the regional Palmetto Colleges, the hiring authority for faculty positions is the chancellor for Palmetto College. The chancellor may delegate this responsibility or specific aspects of this responsibility in writing.

   c. On the other comprehensive universities, the hiring authority for faculty positions is the executive or senior vice chancellor for academic affairs unless otherwise specified by the chancellor. The executive or senior vice chancellor may delegate this responsibility or specific aspects of this responsibility in writing.

7. Exceptions

   In very unusual circumstances, the president, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost or chancellor may grant exceptions to this policy for their areas of responsibility.

B. Equal Employment Opportunity Hiring Practices

The chief academic officers are responsible for ensuring that policies, procedures, and practices in academic units are consistent and in compliance with federal and state equal employment opportunity and educational access laws, rules and regulations.

Deans, directors, department chairs, center/institute directors, academic program managers, search committees and faculty members are responsible for implementing these policies and procedures at the campus, college, school, center, institute, and academic unit level.

1. It is the policy of the University of South Carolina to recruit, hire, train, promote, tenure, and otherwise make educational and personnel decisions without regard to any protected class as defined in policy CR 1.00 Policy Against Discrimination Harassment & Sexual Misconduct (except where sex, gender or age is a bonafide occupational qualification). All searches must be conducted in a fair and open manner, with documented efforts to develop the strongest pool possible. All applicants must be equitably evaluated.

C. Freedom of Information Act

Search committees at the university are within the definition of a "public body" found in the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Therefore, all search committees must operate within the requirements of FOIA. See also policy UNIV 2.00 Freedom of Information.

D. Joint Appointments across Departments, Academic Programs, Schools, Colleges or Campuses

Faculty members with joint appointments have defined responsibilities, distribution of effort and commitments in two or more units. One unit, typically with the highest level of effort is the primary unit while others are secondary units. Joint appointments may be either continuing or fixed-term appointments.

1. All joint appointments must be endorsed by all participating hiring authorities.

2. Search committees for joint appointments within the same campus, college or school must be constituted by the primary unit hiring authority or his/her designee. Search committees for joint appointments across colleges, schools, centers or institutes must be constituted by the primary unit hiring authority, in consultation with the hiring authorities of all participating academic units.

3. Each joint appointment of a new hire or an existing faculty member should be formalized by a memorandum of understanding or charter that specifies the responsibilities of the faculty member to the primary and secondary units. The memorandum of understanding shall stipulate procedures for faculty evaluation and agreements regarding the allocation of resources. It should also address how the joint appointment can be rescinded at the request of the faculty or academic unit. Faculty members holding joint appointments will have full

rights and privileges of the primary department except as otherwise agreed in the memorandum of understanding.

4. For USC Columbia and the regional Palmetto Colleges, all draft memoranda of understanding for joint appointments of new or existing faculty within the same college or school or across USC Columbia colleges, schools, centers, institutes or the regional Palmetto Colleges must be reviewed by the Office of the Provost prior to becoming final. Joint appointments on USC Columbia must follow the USC Columbia *Faculty Manual* Section entitled "Faculty with Joint Appointments."

5. Guidelines and procedures governing appointments, review and promotion of faculty with joint appointments can be found in each respective *Faculty Manual* within the USC system, if applicable.

PROCEDURES

A. Search Committee Composition

Search committees must be representative of the university community whenever possible and practical. The proportion of tenured, tenure-track, and professional-track faculty members will be determined by the hiring authority and should reflect the mission of the unit and the relative proportions of the faculty within the unit.

The hiring authority or his/her designee will select the search committee members, in consultation with departmental or unit faculty, and appoint a chair of the committee. Normally, the head of the department or unit should not serve as chair of the search committee.

B. Search Process for FTE Faculty Searches

1. Search Committee Charge: Every search for an FTE faculty position must be conducted by a search committee. Every search committee must meet with the hiring authority or his/her representative(s), before initiating the search to be charged and to discuss search guidelines and required procedures.

2. Advertising: Searches for new and replacement faculty members must be advertised no less than five working days and preferably for ten calendar days in one or more written and/or electronic national publications. On the Columbia campus, new and replacement faculty positions must be advertised for a minimum of 45 calendar days. See also procedure section C. 3 below.

C. Required Hiring Documentation

All faculty hires must meet the guidelines below before the hiring process is completed.

1. Offer of Employment: An offer of employment must be in writing and must include the name of the hiring department, rank, salary, pay basis and effective date. A formal offer of employment cannot be made before required approvals are obtained. Employment expectations will state the responsibilities for teaching, scholarly performance, service, and

extramural funding, as well as other specific criteria or service activities appropriate to the position. Information requirements such as the verification of degree(s) and background check(s) must be included, as well as contingencies such as moving or non-U.S. Citizenship requirements, as necessary. Criteria relating to all university, state and federal law requirements must be included as applicable. Sample letters and information links are available on the Office of the Provost website at Documents - Office of the Provost.

2. Academic Titles: Tenured, tenure-track and professional-track faculty may only be appointed to a position using one of the academic titles specified in policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions. The hiring authority will confirm that the correct title is used and that the candidates meet the required criteria for appointment. All exceptions must be approved in writing by the appropriate chief academic officer. This written approval should accompany the related hiring and personnel forms submitted to the Division of Human Resources for processing.

3. Non-U.S. Citizens: If the proposed offer of employment will be to a non-U.S. citizen, the Division for International Student and Scholar Support (ISSS) must be contacted prior to extending a verbal or written offer to ensure adherence to all federal and state regulations regarding the hiring of non-U.S. citizens; best practice is to contact ISSS before placing advertisements when recruiting from a world-wide talent pool. See policy UNIV 2.60 Appointment and Employment of Foreign Nationals.

4. Tenure Clock Start Date for New Tenure-Track Faculty: Tenure-track faculty will normally begin employment at the university on either January 1 or August 16. All new faculty not beginning employment on January 1 or August 16, regardless of basis or hiring date, can be assigned official tenure-track status only on January 1 or August 16, whichever is the next date following the faculty member's hiring date. The hiring authority will ensure that the appropriate date, specifying when the faculty member's official tenure-track status will begin, is included in the individual's offer letter.

5. Required Job Reference & Background Checks for Faculty Positions: A job reference and criminal background check must be conducted for the final candidate for a faculty position at any level. By submitting the employment application, the candidate is authorizing the routine inquiry for the applicant's employment history. All faculty hires are contingent upon satisfactory results from the job reference and criminal background check. See also university policy HR 1.90 Background Screenings and Professional References.

6. The Electronic Verification of Employment Eligibility (E-Verify): Federal Law requires that all employers verify the identity and employment eligibility of all new employees (including U.S. citizens) within three days of hire. Employers are required to complete a Form I-9, and employees must provide employers with documents establishing both identity and eligibility to work in the United States.

7. Letters of Reference: All faculty hires require three letters of reference. The letters must be received by the hiring authority before the job offer is made.

8. Written Acceptance: The final candidate's signed acceptance of offer of employment must be received by the hiring authority prior to completion of the final hiring documents.

9. Credential Verification

    a. The final candidate for a faculty position at any level must provide certified copies of academic credentials (i.e. official transcripts) to the hiring authority, as required by SACSCOC. All university faculty and other academic personnel involved in instruction must meet SACSCOC credential requirements for teaching at the appropriate level as outlined in policy ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructors of Record.

    b. Individuals appointed to a tenure-track faculty position must have obtained a terminal academic degree appropriate to the field. (See also policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions.)

    c. Official records of faculty credentials must be maintained by the office of the hiring authority for as long as the individual is in a faculty or instructional position.

D. Maintenance of Official Search File

The office of the hiring authority or its designee has the responsibility for maintenance of the official search file for each position, including all materials submitted by applicants, documentation of advertisement when applicable, all search committee documents including meeting minutes when applicable, and any other documents related to the search. This file must be maintained for three years. In cases where a search process included known non-U.S. citizens as applicants, the file must be maintained for 6.5 years from the date an offer was made to an international scholar who accepted it.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

USC Columbia *Faculty Manual*
USC Palmetto College Campuses *Faculty Manual*
USC Aiken *Faculty Manual*
USC Beaufort *Faculty Manual*
USC Upstate *Faculty Manual*
ACAF 1.01 Recruitment and Appointment of Academic Administrators
ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions
ACAF 1.16 Professional-Track Faculty
ACAF 1.18 Change of Status between Tenure Track and Professional Track
ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructors of Record
ACAF 1.21 Appointment and Review of Endowed Chairs and Named Professorships
ACAF 1.24 Selection and Appointment of Department Chairs and School Directors
ACAF 1.61 Faculty Dual Career Accommodation

CR 1.00 Policy Against Discrimination Harassment & Sexual Misconduct
CR 2.00 Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
UNIV 2.00 Freedom of Information Policy
UNIV 2.60 Appointment and Employment of Foreign Nationals
HR 1.90 Job Reference and Background Checks

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
February 1, 1995	New policy approval
August 27, 2010	Consolidated policies ACAF 1.00, ACAF 1.03, ACAF 1.07 and ACAF 1.09 into one updated policy and related procedures for the recruitment and appointment of all tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty positions. Guidelines and procedures for joint appointments across departments within one college/school or across colleges/schools were also added.
September 14, 2012	Changed the time required for the retention of search and hiring records from five years to three years. Also revised to clarify retention requirements for faculty credentials.
December 01, 2014	Revised to update system and campus name changes and to clarify procedures for joint appointments.
October 31, 2016	Revised to reference related policy, ACAF 1.20 Credential Verification for Instructors of Record, and to remove outdated procedures regarding SACSCOC Faculty Roster responsibilities. Title lists removed and reference to ACAF 1.06 where titles are defined included.
June 3, 2021	Update format and titles. Clarify various procedural details.
August 8, 2022	Clarification of temporary faculty member hire.
March 2, 2026	Changed USC Columbia faculty search requirements to include national advertisements for a minimum of 45 calendar days. Updated information on international faculty hiring. Minor edits and clarifications.