

Adjunct vs. joint faculty appointments

The following changes are proposed to fix several inconsistencies in sections 3.5, 4.2.6 and 4.2.8 of the current UTK Faculty Handbook regarding the terminology for faculty who are affiliated with more than one department. In particular, this change explicitly recommends the term “joint faculty” to be used for appointments of UTK faculty in departments outside their home UTK department. In addition, change is proposed to a sentence in Chapter 4.2.8 to explicitly clarify that non-UTK-based joint faculty are not eligible for UTK tenure.

Rationale: the term “adjunct faculty” is commonly used as a position title (academic rank) for a part-time role held by an individual within the University who is not primarily employed by the University. Faculty who hold a certain academic rank in one department should not be classified as adjunct faculty in another department; it is not a department-specific role. For example, Boston University (<https://www.bu.edu/handbook/appointments-and-promotions/classification-of-ranks-and-titles/>) defines an adjunct faculty as “a scholar whose primary place of employment is not Boston University or whose primary employment with the University is not in a faculty capacity. An Adjunct Professor is an expert in a special field appointed to give instruction on a part-time or discontinuous basis.”

The recommended changes involve adding clarifying text to Chapter 3.5, a slight text modification to one sentence in Chapter 4.2.6, and the addition of one sentence and a slight text modification in another sentence in Chapter 4.2.8 in the Faculty Handbook to explicitly clarify that Joint Faculty designation can be used for UTK faculty affiliated with UTK department(s) outside their home UTK department.

Proposed modification to section 3.5 (pp. 18-19) of the Faculty Handbook (proposed additions are underlined):

Joint appointments involve participation in the teaching and research of two or more UTK departments, or involve non-UTK research units such as Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). Joint appointments with the Agricultural Experiment Station, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, and the Agricultural Extension Service are common in the Institute of Agriculture. The primary department with which the faculty member is affiliated, through which all matters of promotion, salary raise, and tenure are processed, is the “home” department. On all matters, the home department should consult with the department head and faculty of the other unit. Where joint appointments involve equal time in two or more units or service primarily within an interdisciplinary program, it is the shared responsibility of the heads, deans, or other administrative officers to make appropriate recommendations; and in such cases, one of the two units should be designated as the home department. The original appointment letter must specify the faculty member¹s home department, administrative reporting relationships, and the peer group(s) to be consulted in tenure and promotion recommendations. The university recognizes that as the shape of knowledge changes, new disciplinary and interdisciplinary needs may emerge which does not precisely correspond to existing administrative or departmental lines.

Proposed modification to section 4.2.6 (p. 41) of the Faculty Handbook (delete highlighted strikethrough text and add underlined text):

4.2.6 Adjunct Faculty. Individuals who provide uncompensated or part-time compensated service to the instructional and/or research programs of the university may be given adjunct faculty appointments. As with all other non-tenure-track faculty appointments, the Office of the Provost will issue letters of appointment to adjunct faculty members. ~~Staff~~ UTK non-faculty exempt employees with appropriate expertise who, on occasion, provide instruction or participate in research may be given adjunct faculty appointments in a department other than that in which their budget line resides. Professional credentials and/or the terminal degree required for appointment to professorial ranks are required for adjunct faculty appointments. Adjunct faculty may serve on graduate committees, serve as program directors, supervise clinical experiences, or assume other responsibilities as are consistent with university, college, and departmental policies. Adjunct faculty appointments may be made at the rank of adjunct professor, adjunct associate professor, adjunct assistant professor, or adjunct lecturer. Tenured and tenure-track faculty will evaluate the recommended rank in accordance with departmental and college bylaws.

Proposed modification to section 4.2.8 (pp. 41-42) of the Faculty Handbook (add underlined text, and delete strikethrough text):

4.2.8 Joint Faculty Appointments. Joint Faculty members are appointed under the terms of a Joint Faculty Agreement between the University of Tennessee and another entity, such as the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. In addition, UTK faculty members can be appointed to a UTK department outside of their home UTK department as a Joint Faculty member. Joint Faculty members with ~~the other entity as~~ a non-UTK home institution are not eligible for tenure. Joint Faculty members carry one of the following titles: Joint Faculty Assistant Professor, Joint Faculty Associate Professor, or Joint Faculty Professor. Department and college bylaws, in conjunction with university policy and procedure, establish standards and procedures relating to searches for and promotion of Joint Faculty. Joint Faculty members participate in teaching, research, and service missions of the department or college with which they are associated in accordance with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook. The specific allocation of effort in the UTK department or college is negotiated as part of the Joint Faculty Agreement. Joint Faculty members are evaluated on their allocation of effort in the UTK department or college on an annual basis.