

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS, PROMOTIONS, AND TENURE

I. General Policy

This policy describes the different types of faculty appointments at Rice University and regulates features, including terms of appointment, processes for offers and acceptance, reappointment and termination processes, and other key issues.

The policy applies to tenure-track faculty ranks and non-tenure-track faculty ranks.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

The provost of Rice University (hereinafter “provost”) has primary responsibility for management of Policy 201.

III. Definitions

Academic year: The academic year is defined as a Fall semester, the following Spring, and the following Summer. The [General Announcements](#) identify the current academic year.

The academic year’s start and end dates vary from year to year. However, the Fall semester starts with orientation week, usually around mid-August, and the Spring semester ends with the commencement ceremonies, usually around mid-May. Faculty on nine-month appointments are expected to be engaged in Rice business/activities between these start and end dates. (See also [Policy 206–71](#) “Summer Recess for Faculty Members.”)

Fiscal year: The Rice fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the following year.

Offer letter: Letter informing a person of a proffered faculty appointment and containing its terms and conditions. Appointments must go through an appropriate approval process before the letter is sent. See section 4.a.

Tenure: See section 2.a.

Tenure clock: See section 3.a.

IV. Elaboration of Policy

The following policy was endorsed by the Faculty Senate on September 20, 2017.

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1. Faculty appointments

Faculty appointments may be in either the tenure-track faculty ranks or the non-tenure-track faculty ranks.¹

1.a. Appointments in the tenure-track faculty ranks

Appointments in the tenure-track faculty ranks usually involve responsibilities in three areas: (1) research, scholarship, or creative work; (2) teaching and mentoring; and (3) university service (through committee service, advising, or other duties). These ranks include:

- Assistant professor,
- Associate professor, and
- (Full) professor.

1.b. Appointments in the non-tenure-track faculty ranks

Appointments in the non-tenure-track faculty ranks may involve responsibilities in (1) research, scholarship, or creative work; (2) teaching and mentoring; and (3) university service (through committee service, advising, or other duties) but seldom in all three areas and may involve other types of roles. The non-tenure-track faculty ranks include:

1.b.1. Non-tenure-track promotable faculty ranks

- Assistant research professor,
- Associate research professor, and
- (Full) research professor;
- Assistant teaching professor,
- Associate teaching professor, and
- (Full) teaching professor;
- Lecturer, and
- Senior lecturer.

1.b.2. Other non-tenure-track faculty ranks

- Professor in the practice rank,
- Instructor rank,
- Special faculty ranks,
- Visiting appointments, and
- Adjunct appointments.

2. Tenure

2.a. Definition of tenure

Tenure is the privilege of holding an appointment as an associate professor or professor until retirement, resignation, or dismissal for cause. (See Section 8 of this policy.)

2.b. Who may be awarded tenure

Only faculty in the tenure-track faculty ranks may be awarded tenure after appointment at or promotion to the rank of associate professor or professor. All other faculty are appointed for a specified term.

¹ Throughout Policy 201, “faculty appointments” and “academic appointments” are used interchangeably.

2.c. Review for tenure prior to initial appointment

Before a new faculty member is appointed to a position with tenure, the Promotion and Tenure Committee (hereinafter “P&T Committee”) in consultation with the department, the dean, the provost, and the president of Rice University (“president”) reviews the candidate's dossier, which must include information regarding the candidate's ability as a scholar, teacher and participant in service to Rice and beyond.

2.d. When tenure is effective

Tenure for a faculty member becomes effective only after the Board of Trustees of Rice University (“the Board”) has approved the president's recommendation for tenure. Tenure is ordinarily effective the following July 1.

3. Terms of appointment

Section 3.a. covers terms of appointment that are specific to the tenure-track faculty ranks, and Section 3.b. covers terms of appointment that are specific to the non-tenure-track faculty ranks. Section 3.c. covers special cases that may apply in both categories.

3.a. Terms of appointment for tenure-track faculty ranks

The tenure-track faculty ranks include the positions of assistant professor, associate professor, and (full) professor.

The “tenure clock” is the schedule for the probationary period during which a person in the tenure-track faculty ranks becomes eligible for tenure review.

- If the appointment starts on July 1, the tenure clock also starts that day.
- If the appointment starts on a different day, the tenure clock usually starts on the previous July 1.

3.a.1. Terms of appointment for the rank of assistant professor

An assistant professor’s initial contract is for four years. [Policy 214–03](#) “Faculty Performance Reviews” explains the schedule for the periodic performance evaluation of faculty members in the tenure-track faculty ranks. In addition to these performance evaluations, assistant professors receive two formal reviews: a reappointment review and a tenure review. The [Guidelines for Faculty Appointments, Promotion, and Renewal of Contracts](#) further describe the process to be followed.

The reappointment review occurs in the third year; this process determines whether:

- The person should be reappointed for a second 4-year contract as assistant professor, or
- The appointment in the tenure-track faculty ranks should be terminated at the end of the first contract.

The tenure review determines whether:

- The person should be promoted to associate professor with tenure, or
- The appointment in the tenure-track faculty ranks should be terminated at the end of the second contract

If the assistant professor is reappointed, the person may take a paid, one-semester junior leave devoted entirely to research, scholarship, or creative work, usually in the fourth or fifth year.

If the assistant professor is not reappointed, the fourth year is the final year in the tenure-track faculty ranks. No review for reappointment² is made in a contract’s final year. If

² Throughout Policy 201, “reappointment” and “appointment renewal” are used interchangeably.

not reappointed, the person cannot be appointed to any other tenure-track faculty rank.

An assistant professor's second contract as assistant professor is for four years. The tenure review usually takes place in the seventh year of the eight-year tenure clock. However, an assistant professor, in consultation with the department chair and the dean, may request review for tenure earlier.

If the assistant professor is not promoted and granted tenure by the end of the seventh year, the eighth year is the final year in the tenure-track faculty ranks. No review for tenure is made in a contract's final year. If not promoted and granted tenure, the person cannot be appointed to any other tenure-track faculty rank.

The tenure clock for assistant professors is as follows:

Appointment to initial contract and assumption of duties	Year 1
Reappointment review	Year 3
Reappointment for a second contract as assistant professor or notification of terminal year	Year 3
Second contract begins	Year 5
Junior research leave	Year 4 or 5
Tenure review	Year 7 or earlier
Promotion or notification of terminal year	No later than year 7

3.a.1.a. Tenure clock of an assistant professor joining from another institution

Time spent in the tenure-track faculty ranks of another institution prior to the Rice appointment does not count toward a person's tenure clock.

3.a.1.b. Acting assistant professor

An assistant professor appointed contingent on receiving a doctorate or another advanced degree is instead appointed as an acting assistant professor if the degree requirements are not completed by the beginning of the appointment.

An appointment as an acting assistant professor is valid for no more than one year, and it is not renewable.

During that time, the person must provide evidence certified by the graduate dean or the university registrar of the conferring institution that all degree requirements have been fulfilled and that the degree will be conferred at the next degree-conferral opportunity. Of course, equally satisfactory is providing the actual degree itself.

When such evidence is received, the appointment is immediately changed to an appointment as an assistant professor.

Time spent as an acting assistant professor counts toward the tenure clock.

3.a.1.c. Special case for the rank of assistant professor: honorary title

See [Policy 202-03](#).

3.a.2. Terms of appointment for the rank of associate professor or for the rank of professor

An appointment to the rank of associate professor or to the rank of professor is usually conferred with tenure.

Occasionally an appointment to these ranks may be conferred without tenure.

3.a.2.a. Initial appointment without tenure for the rank of associate professor or for the rank of professor

Initial untenured appointment must not exceed three years. The untenured appointment may be renewed, but the total time in tenure-track faculty ranks without tenure must not exceed eight years (excluding leaves that stop the tenure clock).

An associate professor or a professor who was initially appointed without tenure may be reviewed for tenure at any time during the first seven years, but no later. If the person is not awarded tenure by the end of the seventh year, the eighth year is the final year in the tenure-track faculty ranks, as no review for tenure is made in a contract's final year, and the person cannot be appointed to any other tenure-track faculty rank.

3.a.2.b. Part-time appointment for the rank of associate professor or for the rank of professor

Part-time tenure-track faculty rank positions may be at the rank of associate professor or professor. These untenured or tenured appointments are rare and usually involve joint appointments at other institutions. The initial appointment term of a part-time faculty member must be specified in the offer letter. The appointment may be renewed without limitation on total length of service. Appointment to a part-time tenure-track faculty rank position carries no implication of eligibility for promotion or candidacy for any other position.

3.a.2.c. Honorary title for the rank of associate professor or for the rank of professor

See [Policy 202–03](#).

3.a.2.d. Special case for the rank of professor: university professor

See [Policy 202–03](#).

3.b. Terms of appointment for non-tenure-track faculty ranks

By definition, non-tenure-track faculty ranks do not carry tenure and are not tenure eligible. Appointments are for a specified term.

Appointments of non-tenure-track faculty are covered in Policy 213–71, "[Letters Concerning Faculty Appointments](#)."

Some non-tenure-track positions are eligible for part-time appointment. Situations warranting a part-time appointment include instances where the position requires less than full-time dedication, where funding is limited, or where the appointee cannot commit full time. Each school determines what constitutes part-time as opposed to full-time employment.

Periodic performance evaluations for all non-tenure-track faculty are expected on at least an annual basis. The chair, or immediate supervisor if the faculty member is not departmentally affiliated, is responsible. See also Policy 214–03, "[Faculty Performance Reviews](#)."

Voting rights of non-tenure-track faculty in the Senate are defined by the Senate in the [Constitution of the Rice University Faculty Senate](#).

3.b.1. Non-tenure-track promotable faculty ranks

3.b.1.a. Research professor ranks

The research professor ranks include the positions of assistant research professor, associate research professor, and (full) research professor. They are covered by Policy 327, "[Research Faculty](#)."

3.b.1.b. Teaching professor ranks

The teaching professor ranks (“teaching professors”) include the positions of assistant teaching professor, associate teaching professor, and (full) teaching professor. These appointments are intended to foster excellence in teaching. The primary responsibilities of such faculty are to teach, contribute to the application and dissemination of pedagogical practices, and carry out service related to teaching. They are not required nor expected to carry out disciplinary research but may pursue such research or research related to their education mission.

Their scope of service increases with their rank: at the assistant rank, they usually are expected to engage in teaching-related service at the department level; at the associate rank, at the department and/or school levels; and at the full rank, at the department, school, and/or university levels.

Teaching professors should ordinarily hold a terminal degree in an appropriate field for their teaching mission.

Appointments in the teaching professor ranks are usually nine-month, full-time positions. Contracts are for two to three years at the assistant rank and for three to five years at the associate and full ranks. Assistant teaching professors are expected to be promotable after, usually, six years at rank. Medical leaves, including leaves for pregnancy and childbirth leaves, are instances that may extend this time at assistant rank. Failure to be promoted from assistant teaching professor to associate teaching professor results in dismissal from the teaching professor ranks.

Teaching professors are entitled to attend and may vote at faculty meetings at the departmental and school levels that pertain to teaching and curriculum. Chairs or supervisors may at their discretion include teaching professors in faculty meetings that pertain to other departmental matters, with the exception of discussions regarding tenure and promotion of tenure-track faculty.

3.b.1.c. Lecturer ranks

The lecturer ranks (“lecturers”) include the positions of lecturer and senior lecturer. These appointments are intended to foster excellence in teaching. Their primary responsibility is instructional. Unlike teaching professors, lecturers are usually not expected to carry out activities other than teaching and advising students. Lecturers may be appointed initially for up to two years and renewed in increments of up to three years without limitation on total length of service.

Senior lecturers have demonstrated consistent excellence in teaching. Senior lecturers may be appointed initially for up to three years and renewed in increments of up to four years without limitation on total length of service.

Lecturers and senior lecturers may be included in faculty meetings at the departmental and school levels that pertain to teaching or other relevant departmental matters at the discretion of the chair or supervisor.

Appointment in the lecturer ranks carries no implication of eligibility for candidacy for any other position outside of the lecturer ranks.

3.b.2. Other non-tenure-track faculty ranks

3.b.2.a. Professor in the practice rank

The professor in the practice rank is intended to foster excellence in teaching and mentoring by putting students in contact with persons who, by virtue of their credentials and experience (often outside academia), bring a distinctive insight. Professors in the practice may participate in additional roles such as research, as approved by the chair, the dean, and other relevant authority (e.g., vice provost for research if wish to be principal investigator for research support

or department chair and dean of graduate and post-doctoral affairs to serve as member or chair of thesis or dissertation committee).

At the request of a school, a person may be appointed to the rank of "Professor in the Practice of (Field)," such as, for example, Professor in the Practice of Architecture. Professors in the practice may be appointed initially for up to three years and renewed in increments of up to three years without limitation on total length of service. An appointment in this rank carries no implication of eligibility for promotion or candidacy for any other position.

Professors in the practice are entitled to attend and may vote at faculty meetings at the departmental and school levels that pertain to teaching and curriculum. Chairs or supervisors may at their discretion include professors in the practice in faculty meetings that pertain to other departmental matters, with the exception of discussions regarding tenure and promotion decisions of tenure-track faculty.

3.b.2.b. Instructor rank

The instructor rank is an entry-level title for instructional faculty. The duties of an instructor include teaching but usually also incorporate other activities, including scholarly research. At the time of their appointment, instructors usually have had their terminal degree for less than three years or are in the final phase of completing that degree.

Instructors may be appointed initially for up to two years. The initial appointment may be renewed, but the total length of service must not exceed five years. An appointment as an instructor carries no implication of eligibility for promotion or candidacy for any other position. Except for exceptional cases, non-tenure-track faculty with a primarily teaching function should be appointed as lecturers or teaching professors, not instructors.

A small number of faculty appointments in academic departments with duties corresponding to the description of "Instructor" are named positions.

3.b.2.c. Special faculty ranks

Certain academic positions merit distinctive titles describing their special functions in the University. Such titles include artist teacher, artist in residence, composer in residence, critic, clinical faculty, and others that may, occasionally, be created with the approval of the provost. These special faculty ranks do not involve the same duties as tenure-track faculty appointments.

The initial appointment may be for up to two years and renewed in increments of up to three years without limitation on total length of service. An appointment in the special faculty ranks carries no implication of eligibility for promotion or candidacy for any other position.

3.c. Special cases

3.c.1. Emeritus status

Persons retiring from tenured ranks may receive emeritus status. This honorary status is permanent, is not equivalent to employment, and does not require teaching or, except through supplemental appointments, entitle the person to support such as clerical help, office space, lab space, and so on.

The eligibility to receive emeritus status depends in part on a person's initial appointment:

- Faculty who were initially appointed to a Rice tenure-track rank before July 1, 1995 automatically receive emeritus status upon retirement.
- Faculty who:

1. Were initially appointed to a Rice tenure-track rank between July 1 1995 and September 9, 1997; and
2. Decided to remain covered by Policy 201–87; and
3. Notified the President’s Office of that decision in writing prior to December 31, 1997

also automatically receive the emeritus status upon retirement.

- All other tenured faculty may receive emeritus status upon retirement.

Supplemental appointments³ for emeritus faculty. Some emeritus faculty are hired to teach courses or conduct other projects. The terms and conditions of these supplemental appointments do not involve a change of title. The person remains an emeritus faculty but may also take on a supplemental title during the appointment, such as project director or department chair. The terms and conditions of these appointments must be approved as stipulated in [Policy 213–71](#) “Letters Concerning Faculty Appointments.”

3.c.2. Honorary title

Faculty in some non-tenure-track faculty ranks are eligible for honorary titles. See [Policy 202–03](#).

3.c.3. Visiting appointment

A person who holds an academic appointment at another institution may be invited for a visiting appointment at a comparable rank at Rice University. The terms and conditions of these appointments must be approved as stipulated in [Policy 213–71](#) “Letters Concerning Faculty Appointments.”

Except in rare circumstances, the terms and conditions of a visiting person's contract at his or her home institution must provide for that person to continue in employment there after the visiting appointment at Rice expires.

Appointment to a part-time position carries no implication of eligibility for full-time employment, promotion, or candidacy for any other position.

A visiting appointment automatically terminates at the end of the term of appointment.

3.c.4. Adjunct appointment

A person whose primary affiliation is not Rice University but whose professional or scholarly activities enrich and complement Rice may be offered an adjunct appointment. There are adjunct professors, adjunct lecturers, adjunct instructors, and various other adjunct faculty.

An adjunct appointment is unpaid. An initial adjunct appointment may be for up to two years and may be renewed in increments of up to three years without limitation on total length of service.

3.c.5. Supplemental appointment

A supplemental appointment, by definition, comes in addition to a primary appointment. The policies and guidelines that apply to a person holding a supplemental appointment depend on the nature of their functions. For instance, a staff employee with a supplemental lecturer appointment is primarily regulated by staff policies and procedures (including employment rules and benefits eligibility for staff), though departmental and other faculty rules may apply to the individual’s responsibilities as a lecturer.

3.c.6. Joint appointment

A joint appointment is an appointment between two or more departments, one of which

³ Throughout Policy 201, “supplemental appointment” and “secondary appointment” are used interchangeably.

may be outside of Rice. A joint appointment may be extended when a person has significant teaching and/or research involvements in the two units. Tenure at Rice may only be granted if the primary department is at Rice and will be provided through that department.

4. Offers and acceptances

4.a. Offer letter

All faculty appointments are subject to the approval of the appropriate university authorities as stipulated in [Policy 213-71](#) “Letters Concerning Faculty Appointments.”

Offers are then formally extended through an offer letter; therefore, all faculty must receive an offer letter. The university authority who is authorized to sign an offer letter depends on the faculty position (see [Policy 213-71](#) “Letters Concerning Faculty Appointments”).

For an appointment in the tenure-track faculty ranks, the letter must specify the beginning date of the appointment. If the appointment is untenured, the offer letter must also specify the end date of the appointment and the start date of the tenure clock.

For an appointment in the non-tenure-track faculty ranks, the offer letter must specify the beginning and the end dates of the appointment.

The offer letter must include a section specifying that the appointment, including the tenure clock where applicable, is subject to Policy 201.

4.b. Acceptance of offer

To accept an offer, the appointee signs a copy of the offer letter specifying having read, understood, and accepted the terms and conditions of the appointment, and those of Policy 201, and returns it to the university authority who extended the offer.

5. Process for reappointments and terminations

5.a. Schedule of notification of reappointments and terminations

For visiting and adjunct appointments, no written notice of termination is required.

For all other untenured faculty members in the tenure tracks (principally untenured assistant professors and untenured associate professors) and the non-tenure track, a written notice of reappointment or termination must be given before the appointment expires according to the following schedule:

Condition:	Date of notification:
If the appointment is for twelve months or less	<u>At least two months</u> before the appointment’s end date
If the appointment is for more than twelve months but less than twenty-four months	<u>At least five months</u> before the appointment’s end date
If the appointment is for twenty-four months or more	<u>At least twelve months</u> before the appointment’s end date
If the person has held two or more consecutive appointments, irrespective of their lengths	<u>At least five months</u> before the appointment’s end date

5.b. Performance evaluations before reappointments

The performance of untenured faculty in the tenure-track faculty ranks is covered in [Policy 214-03](#) “Faculty Performance Reviews.”

The performance of faculty in the non-tenure-track faculty ranks must be documented with written evaluations that are reviewed by the department chair and the dean. The review period varies, depending on the length of the appointment; every person must be reviewed before reappointment.

5.c. Resignation process

A faculty member who intends to resign should submit a written notification to the provost with a copy to the dean and department chair of his or her intention no later than thirty days before the intended resignation date, or within thirty days of having received written notice of the terms of reappointment, whichever comes later.

5.d. Retirement process

A faculty member who intends to retire should notify the provost with a copy to the dean and department chair of his or her intention as early as possible, usually at the end of the academic year preceding the final year of service and no later than April 15 of the year of retirement, or thirty days after receiving written notice of the terms of reappointment, whichever comes later.

5.e. Termination process for untenured faculty in the tenure-track faculty ranks in their first contract period who are not renewed for a second contract

An untenured faculty member who has been reviewed during an initial contract and who has not been granted a contract renewal will be notified no later than one year before the end of the contract that the appointment in the tenure-track faculty ranks will be terminated at the end of the contract and that no further review for promotion will be made.

5.f. Termination process for non-tenured faculty who are not awarded tenure or promoted with tenure by the end of the seventh year

An untenured faculty member in the tenure-track faculty ranks who has been reviewed and who has not been granted promotion and tenure by the end of the seventh year shall be notified no later than one year before the end of the contract that the appointment in the tenure-track faculty ranks will be terminated at the end of the contract.

6. Promotions

6.a. Tenure-track faculty ranks without tenure: promotion of an assistant professor

The tenure clock for an assistant professor is presented in section 3.a.1. See also [Policy 204-03](#) “Faculty Family, Primary Caregiver, Medical, and Professional Leaves,” [Policy 208](#) “Sabbatical Leaves of Absence,” [Guidelines for Faculty Appointments, Promotion, Tenure and Renewal of Contracts](#), and section 7.a.1. below for the impact of some leaves on the tenure clock.

6.b. Tenure-track faculty ranks without tenure: promotion of an associate professor without tenure or a professor without tenure

See section 3.a.2.

6.c. Tenure-track faculty ranks with tenure: promotion of an associate professor with tenure

As part of the continuing evaluation of the professional growth of each member of the faculty, chairs review the performance of all departmental faculty according to the schedule detailed in [Policy 214-03](#) “Faculty Performance Reviews.”

6.c.1. Departmental evaluations of associate professors with tenure

Appointment to the rank of associate professor with tenure does not imply commitment to further promotion. Before an associate professor with tenure may be promoted, the department must prepare a dossier according to the procedures laid out in

the [Guidelines for Faculty Appointments, Promotion, and Renewal of Contracts](#), including the candidate's record in teaching, scholarship, and service to the University.

The tenured full professors in the department will evaluate this record and, if they consider it worthy of promotion, the department chair will forward their recommendation to the dean, who will evaluate the dossier and recommendation.

6.c.2. Reports by the dean

If the dean does not recommend the candidate for promotion, the dean will report this action to the P&T Committee in a timely fashion and discuss the decision with them. The dossier need not be forwarded.

If the dean recommends the candidate for promotion, the dean will add a letter of recommendation and evaluation to the dossier and forward the entire package to the P&T Committee.

6.d. Non-tenure-track faculty ranks

For promotion of persons in the teaching faculty ranks, see Procedures for Appointments and Promotion for Teaching Professor Ranks.

For promotion of persons in the research faculty ranks, see [Policy 327](#) “Research Faculty.”

7. Leaves of absence

7.a. Leaves for the tenure-track faculty ranks

See [Policy 204–03](#) “Faculty Family, Primary Caregiver, Medical, and Professional Leave” and [Policy 208](#) “Sabbatical Leaves of Absence” for the impact of some leaves on the tenure clock.

7.a.1. Impact of leaves on tenure clock

Leaves for the tenure-track faculty ranks may, under certain circumstances, extend the tenure clock for untenured professors. These leaves are regulated by [Policy 204–03](#) “Faculty Family, Primary Caregiver, Medical, and Professional Leave.” Sabbatical leaves are regulated by [Policy 208](#) “Sabbatical Leaves of Absence.”

An approved leave of absence from Rice University without pay is not counted in the eight-year limitation on service for untenured, tenure-track professors if, due to the nature of the leave, the faculty member is unable to continue the pursuit of normal scholarly activities during that period. This extension must be requested in writing at the time the leave is requested. The provost, in consultation with the dean, will determine how such a leave will affect the timing of the review for promotion. All leaves during which normal research activities are continued will count toward the eight-year limitation.

7.b. Leaves for the non-tenure-track faculty ranks

7.b.1. Leaves for the research professor ranks

See [Policy 327](#) “[Research Faculty](#).”

7.b.2. Leaves for the teaching professor ranks

Faculty in the teaching professor ranks are eligible for primary caregiver leaves. They are not eligible for sabbatical / professional leaves or for paid time off.

7.b.3. Leaves for other faculty ranks

Other faculty members are not eligible for primary caregiver leaves, sabbatical / professional leaves, and paid time off.

8. Dismissal, sanctions short of dismissal, and suspension

8.a. Dismissal proceedings and sanctions

8.a.1. Causes

Dismissal of tenure-track or non-tenure-track faculty members who are employed with continuous tenure or for a specified term before the end of the specified term can only occur for cause. Adequate cause for dismissal must be related, directly and substantially, to the fitness of faculty members in their professional capacities as teachers or scholars. Dismissal will not be used to restrain faculty members in their exercise of academic freedom or other rights under U.S. law. Examples of behavior that, in their most serious form, may directly and substantially detract from the professional capacities of faculty members in their roles as teachers and scholars are failure to perform duties, fiscal malfeasance, plagiarism, dishonest research, and sexual harassment.

8.a.2. Initiation of proceedings

A faculty member will be dismissed for cause only after he or she has had an opportunity for a formal hearing by a faculty Hearing Panel convened for the express purpose of considering dismissal for cause. The president or the president's delegate will initiate consideration of dismissal by presenting to the speaker of the Faculty Senate ("speaker") a written statement of the allegations, framed with reasonable particularity, that, if established, would justify dismissal.

8.a.3. Proceedings

The Faculty Senate, in consultation with the president, will establish the procedure to be followed during dismissal hearings, and any subsequent changes in that procedure affecting the authority of the president or the Board must be approved by the president or the Board (see the Faculty Senate's [Procedure for investigating accusations](#)). The speaker will ensure an opportunity for a dignified, careful, and fair hearing in which:

1. Written notice will be given to the faculty member of the administration's allegations against him or her;
2. The faculty member will be considered fit in his or her capacity as a teacher or scholar until proven otherwise;
3. The confidentiality of the proceedings will be guaranteed and the privacy of the faculty member will be respected;
4. An unbiased panel composed solely of faculty members will be chosen; and
5. An opportunity will be given to the faculty member to be present throughout the hearing, to confront and question witnesses to the extent permitted by law and regulation, and to give information in his or her favor. The hearing panel will reserve the right, at any time before, during, or after the formal hearing, to meet in closed session outside the presence of the parties or their representatives.

8.a.4. Report of findings

Following the hearing, the panel will weigh the evidence and give to the president a written report, containing both its findings and its recommendations. The president, after reaching a decision, will inform the Board.

8.a.5. Applicability of other policies

Occasionally, other university policies may be established, such as the currently existing policies on sexual harassment and research misconduct, that provide for a range of potential sanctions and a committee to review allegations against a faculty member. A hearing held in accordance with those policies will not substitute for the dismissal proceedings required in this policy as described above in paragraphs 8.a.2 through 8.a.4.

8.a.6. Temporary suspension

Pending a final report by the hearing panel, the administration may suspend the accused faculty member—for example, by placing the accused on administrative leave or assigning him or her to other duties in lieu of leave—only if continuance threatens harm to other persons, to the accused, to university property, or to university operations. A faculty member who has been suspended pending a hearing receives full salary throughout the period of suspension. A suspension that is not followed either by reinstatement or by the opportunity for a hearing is in effect a summary dismissal in violation of academic due process.

8.b. Proceedings and sanctions other than dismissal

8.b.1. Severe sanctions

If the behavior of a faculty member, although not constituting adequate cause for dismissal, is sufficiently grave to justify imposition of a severe sanction, such as suspension from service for a stated period, the procedures specified in paragraphs 8.a.2 through 8.a.4 will be followed.

8.b.2. Minor sanctions

If the administration believes that the conduct of a faculty member justifies imposition of a minor sanction, such as a letter of reprimand, it will notify the faculty member of the reasons for the proposed sanction and provide an opportunity for the faculty member to persuade the administration that the proposed sanction should not be imposed.

8.b.3. Grievance process

A faculty member who believes that an imposed sanction that has been described as minor is actually a severe sanction, or that a minor sanction has been unjustly imposed, may submit a grievance petition to the Faculty Senate Convenor of Appeals and Grievances for such action as may be appropriate. Grievances arising from normal salary administration will not be covered by this policy.

8.c. Dismissal because of discontinuance or reduction of programs or departments

Notwithstanding the provisions of 8.a. above, it is specifically understood that the University may terminate an appointment before the end of a specified term or while the appointment is held with tenure if the number of faculty members must be reduced as a result of a good faith discontinuance or reduction in size of all or part of a program, department, or other segment of University operations. Such a discontinuance or reduction will be implemented only after consideration of the educational, economic, and other relevant aspects of the decision, and shall include a review by the Board. An effort will be made to ease any dislocation experienced by the faculty members involved.

V. Cross Reference to Related Policies

Policy 202–03, “[Honorary Faculty Titles](#)”
Policy 204–03, “[Faculty Family, Medical, and Professional Leaves](#)”
Policy 206–71, “[Summer Recess for Faculty Members](#)”
Policy 208, “[Sabbatical Leaves of Absence](#)”
Policy 213–71, “[Letters Concerning Faculty Appointments](#)”
Policy 214–03, “[Faculty Performance Reviews](#)”
Policy 327, “[Research Faculty](#)”

VI. Responsible Official and Key Offices to Contact Regarding the Policy and its Implementation

Responsible Official: Provost

Other Key Offices: Faculty Senate
Human Resources

VII. Links to Additional Information

[Guidelines for Faculty Appointments, Promotion, Tenure and Renewal of Contracts](#)
[General Announcements](#)
[Procedure for investigating accusations](#)
Procedures for appointments for teaching professor ranks
[Constitution of the Rice University Faculty Senate](#)

Signed David W. Leebron
David W. Leebron
President

Policy History

Revised: April 6, 2018

May 12, 2016

August 23, 2013

February 2, 2010

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(repeals and replaces Policy 203, *Faculty Appointment-Assistant Professor*)