

**GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT AND
PROMOTION OF CLINICAL FACULTY
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS**

INTRODUCTION

As a collaborator in the process of teaching, research, and public service, the University Libraries provides leadership in the access and use of information through a variety of cooperative and reciprocal programs with other academic communities and libraries in Tennessee, the Mid-South region, and beyond. The University Libraries is committed to equity of access to all types of information in the belief that such access supports the development of intellectual, cultural, and ethical qualities in individuals.

The University Libraries clinical faculty, who are specialists in information education, participate in the teaching, and public service programs of the University, regardless of physical location of the activity or information. They provide access to scholarly resources through the acquisition, organization, management, and preservation of the collections and through supportive reference and instruction services. Specialists in these various aspects of library service address many challenges including integrating information resources into the intellectual life of the University, developing instruction programs, teaching library users how to think critically about their information needs, obtaining support for the implementation of new information access technologies, operating multiple information systems simultaneously, training University Libraries faculty and staff, and maintaining a leadership role in the state, region, and nation, which maximizes the University's investments in information expertise, resources, and services provided for the students, faculty and staff of the University and the community.

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION TO THE RANKS OF
CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, AND CLINICAL
PROFESSOR**

Academic preparation for appointment to the University Libraries Faculty is established on the basis of the terminal professional degree. The University Libraries, in accordance with the [policy of the Association of College and Research Libraries \(ACRL\)](#), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), recognizes that "the master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association or from a program in a country with a formal accreditation process as identified by ALA's Human Resource Development and Recruitment Office is the appropriate terminal professional degree for

academic librarians." (Approved as policy by the Board of Directors of ACRL, a division of ALA on January 23, 1975. Reaffirmed by the ACRL Board of Directors, June 2001 and June 2007. Modified and reaffirmed by the ACRL Board of Directors at the Spring Executive Committee Meeting, May 11, 2011. Reaffirmed by the ACRL Board of Directors, April 2018.) The criteria for appointment and promotion are designed to reflect the national norms in academic librarianship and to provide motivation for University Libraries clinical faculty members to achieve excellence in their profession. Meeting these requirements does not guarantee a particular outcome but does guarantee serious consideration. Similarly, length of service by itself is no argument for promotion.

The following constitutes minimal requirements for initial appointment and promotion of clinical faculty at the University of Memphis Libraries.

Clinical Assistant Professor

- Earned master's degree from an ALA-accredited program, in keeping with ALA policy which recognizes that the master's degree in library/information science is the terminal degree in the discipline.
- Evidence of potential ability in librarianship and service.
- Professional comportment consistent with the Faculty Code of Conduct.

Clinical Associate Professor

- Earned master's degree from an ALA-accredited program, in keeping with ALA policy which recognizes that the master's degree in library/information science is the terminal degree in the discipline.
- Served at least five years at the rank of clinical assistant professor before applying for promotion during the sixth year. Exceptions to this minimum rank qualification can be approved by the Provost.
- Documented evidence of substantive accomplishments in librarianship and service.
- Professional comportment consistent with the Faculty Code of Conduct.

Clinical Professor

- Earned master's degree from an ALA-accredited program, in keeping with ALA policy which recognizes that the master's degree in library/information science is the terminal degree in the discipline.
- Served at least five years at the rank of clinical associate professor before applying for promotion during the sixth year. Exceptions to this minimum rank qualification can be approved by the Provost.

- Documented evidence of sustained high quality professional productivity and accomplishments in librarianship and service.
- Professional comportment consistent with the Faculty Code of Conduct.

Since there is no higher rank, promotion to professor is taken with great care and requires a level of achievement substantively beyond that required for associate professor. This rank is not a reward for length of service; rather it is recognition of superior achievement within the discipline with every expectation of continuing contributions to the University and the larger academic community.

CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION

Clinical faculty are evaluated on the basis of Librarianship and Service. Librarianship is the equivalent of the teaching category for faculty whose primary responsibility is instruction. Criteria for promotion are weighted as follows: Librarianship 90% and Service 10%. The example activities in the criteria are by their nature not exhaustive, and clinical faculty wishing to include other activities must clearly justify their inclusion in each category. Clinical faculty should document evidence of activities for all criteria for promotion.

Librarianship

Librarianship is central to the purposes and objectives of the University and is to be evaluated, rewarded, and encouraged in ways parallel to those for service. The performance of the candidate is evaluated from multiple sources as they relate to the librarian's area of specialization. Effective librarianship is an essential qualification for promotion, which will not be granted in the absence of clear evidence of a candidate's ability in librarianship and potential for continued development. Excellence in librarianship is a strong recommendation for promotion, though it cannot be considered in isolation from service.

Effective professional librarianship may include, but is not limited to:

- outstanding performance in the main area of responsibility
- participating in University Libraries-wide activities, such as promotion of University Libraries' services, resources, programs
- service on University Libraries' committees that is essential to performing the responsibilities of the clinical faculty member's position
- grant applications submitted in support of librarianship
- enrolling in professionally related continuing education activities, including advanced degree programs
- maintaining current awareness through reading professional literature and attending meetings and workshops

- publishing in professional outlets demonstrating librarianship
- creating outstanding or substantial aids to research.

The effective professional librarian shows initiative, accepts responsibility, and contributes to planning and decision-making. Factors to be considered may include the following: analytical skills; decision-making capability; fairness in instruction and supervision of others; responsible delegation of authority; and independence of judgment and initiative, when appropriate.

Service

Service is a term encompassing a clinical faculty member's activities in the areas of institutional service, professional service, and outreach.

Institutional (University Libraries and University) service may include:

- service on University Libraries' committees that is not essential to performing the responsibilities of the clinical faculty member's position
- participation in University committees, councils, task forces, and the Faculty Senate
- involvement in the governance of the University or the broader academic community
- participation in University activities such as colloquia and seminars
- teaching optional University for-credit courses outside the University Libraries
- grant applications submitted in support of service

Professional service can take many forms. While membership in organizations and attendance at meetings is encouraged, more than membership and attendance is required to demonstrate substantive accomplishments in professional service at the local, regional, national, or international level. Such activities could include:

- serving as an officer in professional organizations
- participating in committees, councils, accrediting bodies, or task forces
- presenting at professional meetings
- presenting tutorial lectures
- acting as program chair or discussant for professional meetings
- refereeing a competitive papers session
- serving with professional publications
- reviewing grant proposals

Outreach, or service to the community, primarily involves sharing professional expertise with the wider community and should directly support the goals and mission of the University.

Community outreach is particularly valuable for an urban institution.

INTERIM DOSSIER REVIEW

Clinical assistant faculty are required to undergo an interim dossier review in the spring semester at least two years prior to the formal application for promotion to clinical associate professor. The request for dossier review should be made to the Chair of the Libraries Promotion and

Tenure Committee. The interim dossier review, conducted by the University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee, is designed to provide clinical faculty members with information about the status of their progress toward promotion. The clinical faculty member will provide documentation of contributions and accomplishments in librarianship and service. The format for the dossier review is the same as that for promotion consideration. The outcome of this review will remain in the University Libraries.

Clinical faculty members should give serious consideration to the comments and suggestions made as part of the interim dossier review. A positive interim review does not guarantee promotion.

RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTION

Each candidate for promotion is evaluated in terms of librarianship and service, which are interrelated and considered collectively. All candidates for promotion are urged to become familiar with Section 5. “Non-Tenure Track Faculty Policies” in the University of Memphis *Faculty Handbook*. The University Libraries guidelines and criteria may be more specific than University policies and may indicate policies unique to the department.

The University Libraries annual review policy parallels that contained in the University of Memphis *Faculty Handbook* under Section 5.4. “Non-Tenure Track Faculty Review and Evaluation.” University Libraries clinical faculty are evaluated during each Spring semester, in accordance with procedures developed and approved by the University Libraries faculty and the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries. Because the annual review documents librarianship and service, it parallels the areas of consideration for promotion and can assist clinical faculty members in gauging their progress toward it. However, satisfactory ratings on the annual evaluations alone do not guarantee promotion.

All candidates for promotion in the University Libraries are evaluated by the University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee and by the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries. The University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee’s report accompanies the application throughout the process. Recommendations from the Committee and the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries will be forwarded to the Provost.

Guidelines

At the heart of the promotion process is the need (a) to articulate specific requirements for promotion, (b) to inform clinical faculty yearly as to their progress, and (c) to communicate these criteria to the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries and the Provost. Accountability for implementing this process begins at the University Libraries level with clearly defined guidelines and criteria for the assessment of clinical faculty for promotion.

These guidelines have been developed and reviewed by the University Libraries faculty and the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries and approved by the Provost. The guidelines serve as the basis of the annual evaluation and promotion processes that all clinical faculty must follow. The guidelines are provided to clinical faculty members at the time they join the University Libraries and must be referred to regularly, particularly at the time of the promotion dossier review and at the time of application for promotion. These guidelines are discipline specific, although in harmony with the general University guidelines. They contain the specific criteria and procedures for clinical faculty assessment and are updated as needed.

In addition to the information in this document, the University Libraries faculty assist clinical faculty through a mentor program directed by the Chair of the University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee. The Committee will coordinate annually the assignment of a mentor for each clinical assistant faculty member. The Chair shall also provide clinical faculty the opportunity for yearly meetings with the University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee to discuss these guidelines and make recommendations towards achieving the requirements for promotion.

Eligibility for Promotion

A clinical faculty member with the rank of assistant professor or higher who has completed a minimum of five years of employment at rank (unless otherwise prescribed in writing and approved by the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries and the Provost) may apply for promotion when they believe they meet the established criteria. The minimum criteria for promotion are stated herein. Typically, the clinical faculty member's intent to apply for promotion is conveyed in the Spring semester (April) of their fifth academic year at rank and the promotion dossier is filed in the Fall semester (September) of their sixth academic year.

Application Timetable

The Provost of the University establishes the calendar for promotion decisions. The Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries informs Libraries

faculty of this timetable. The clinical faculty member must declare their intent to file for promotion to the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries according to the calendar established by the Provost. The Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean informs the Chair of the University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee of this intent to file. The University Libraries internal calendar, while in line with the Provost's calendar, includes specific deadlines which must be followed.

Preparing for Promotion

Candidates for promotion should work closely with the appropriate University Libraries Department Head and/or the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries to define goals and to establish documented evidence of effectiveness to be sure that they are meeting the obligations and performing at the level of expectation of the University Libraries and the University of Memphis. Clinical faculty are responsible for collecting and keeping track of evidence of effectiveness that will be included in the Supplemental Materials in their dossier.

Dossier

General procedures designed to establish a minimal degree of uniformity for promotion dossiers across the University are available for review in the University of Memphis *Faculty Handbook*. It is the responsibility of each candidate to document the nature and extent of involvement in activities relevant to the judgments being made. Leadership roles and accomplishments during the performance of these activities should be detailed and supported with documents by the candidate and/or testimonials from other participants or observers. Professional recognition for service performed should be included. In preparing the dossier, candidates should seek help from their mentor and colleagues, particularly those who serve on the University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee.

The University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee

The University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee reviews promotion dossiers for clinical faculty. The Committee comprises all tenured and clinical faculty at the rank being applied for or above, except the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries. Candidates for promotion are not eligible to serve on the Committee. The Committee elects its own chair.

The majority of the responsibility for appraising a candidate rest with the University Libraries Promotion and Tenure Committee. The Committee gives serious and fair consideration to all candidates for promotion, thoroughly evaluating their activities in

librarianship and service and supporting evidence. After taking a formal, anonymous vote on the promotion of each candidate (with a simple majority required for the Committee's recommendation), the Committee delivers to the Executive Director & Associate Dean / Dean of University Libraries a detailed recommendation, rationale, and an exact vote count. A written minority opinion may be included.

Approved by Libraries Faculty: April 21, 2025

Approved by Executive Director & Associate Dean, Gerald Chaudron:

Approved by Provost, David J. Russomanno: