PROMOTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
For
All Levels (I through IV)
Specialists, Agents and Associates

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I. General Aspects of the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Promotion Process*

A. Mission/Purpose of Document

Mission: Cooperative Extension connects the public with university knowledge, research and resources to address youth, family, community and agricultural needs.

Purpose: This Promotion Policies and Procedures document is designed for Extension professionals who are classified as professional employees of the University of Delaware. Specialists not included in the faculty promotion and tenure system are also to be included in these procedures. The overall purpose of the promotion process is to attract, recruit and retain Extension professionals of high quality. The attached career ladder is provided to allow employees to see a viable career path at the University of Delaware thereby encouraging them to apply for promotion to the next level.

B. Overall Promotion Guidelines

Promotion of Extension professionals at the University of Delaware shall be based solely on the policies and procedures outlined in this document. The guidelines are designed to make the process fair and equitable to all regardless of rank and category. Promotion is based on contributions of the individual to Extension teaching and resident instruction, Extension scholarly activities and professional growth and service. Given that Extension professionals may have assigned responsibilities in more than one of these areas and the proportion of time assigned to each may vary, flexibility is required in evaluating the various levels of responsibility.

Extension professionals may apply for advancement to the next level at any time. Career advancement to the next highest rank within the associate, agent, and specialist categories is based on demonstrably increased responsibility and job performance within the organizational unit at the next highest rank. Specifically, the candidate must demonstrate that he or she is either currently performing or is capable of performing the responsibilities at the next highest rank.

Degree requirements apply only to personnel hired after November 3, 1988. All individuals hired prior to this date are eligible to move to the highest rank regardless of their degree(s). A candidate for promotion may withdraw his/her name from consideration at any point in the process. For candidates who complete the process, the Director of Cooperative Extension (hereafter referred to as “Director”) sends the candidate’s credentials, supporting materials, and recommendations from the Candidate’s Peer Committee and the Professional Review Committee (if involved in the final decision) to the Dean. The Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (hereafter referred to as “Dean”) forwards these materials to the Provost for final approval.

Career ladder promotions become effective on July 1. Salary increases for promotions are in accordance with University budget policy and procedures. Nothing in this document should be construed as a contract for continued employment.

*Approval of any amendments to this Promotion Policy and Procedures document shall be by majority vote of the Extension professionals covered by this document with subsequent approval of the Director, Dean and Provost.
C. Preparation of Professional Promotion Document

An individual seeking promotion shall prepare a Professional Promotion Document to demonstrate that he/she is currently performing or capable of performing the responsibilities associated with the rank and level of the position they are seeking. As outlined in the Professional Promotion Document Template (Appendix B), this document should include: contact and position related information, evidence of Extension teaching and resident instruction, Extension scholarly activities and professional growth, and service.

D. Committee Structure – A two committee structure will facilitate the Extension promotion process.

1. Candidate’s Peer Committee

Each person seeking promotion shall have a Candidate’s Peer Committee to be selected via mutual agreement between the individual and his/her supervisor. The committee shall consist of the individual’s supervisor (who serves as chair), one individual within the individual’s area of expertise from University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, and one individual from outside the individual’s area of expertise from within the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension. For specialists, the Director shall serve on the committee as a non-voting co-chair.

The Candidate’s Peer Committee shall meet with the candidate to evaluate his/her job performance, review the Professional Promotion Document, and recommend whether or not performance warrants promotion to the next level.

2. Professional Review Committee

The Professional Review Committee facilitates the process for all those seeking promotion. The Committee consists of five members … at least one individual from each category (associate, agent, and specialist) and no more than 3 individuals from any one rank (I-IV). Individuals who have recently been promoted will serve on this committee. Where there are empty seats, the Director will appoint to guarantee a full slate. Extension professionals making application for promotion and their supervisors may not serve on this Committee.

Professional Review Committee members shall serve a two year term. No committee member shall serve more than two consecutive terms.

The Professional Review Committee provides a neutral, objective second review of job performance and review of the Professional Promotion Document of any candidate who receives a negative recommendation from his/her Peer Committee and/or the Director of Dean. The Committee will meet with the candidate in order to solicit additional evidence that he/she may wish to add to his/her Professional Promotion Document.

E. Evaluation of Promotion Criteria

1. Requirements for Promotion from Rank I to Rank II and from Rank II to Rank III

Past achievements are not as important as evidence of potential for future growth and accomplishment. The candidate should meet the basic qualifications of the rank and position and have fulfilled all special or other requirements associated with the rank. He/she should also be able to demonstrate how they are performing the majority of the criteria required at the next highest rank.
2. Requirements for Promotion from Rank III to Rank IV

Rank IV is reserved for individuals who have established reputations in their disciplines/program areas and whose contributions to the mission and goals of Cooperative Extension are unquestioned. There should be unmistakable evidence of significant development and achievement since their last promotion. This evidence must be thoroughly and completely documented by letters from outside reviewers. The candidate should meet all basic qualifications for the rank and position they are seeking and have fulfilled all special or other requirements thereby associated. He/she should be able to demonstrate that they are performing the majority of the criteria required for Rank IV.

F. Appeal and Grievance Process

A candidate who receives a negative decision has the right to appeal and request a meeting with the Professional Review Committee. This request must be submitted in writing to the Director and Chairperson of the Professional Review Committee within two weeks of receipt of the letter detailing reasons for the negative decision. Within ten working days from the time the candidate submits the written request for an appeal, the committee meets with the candidate to consider any additional evidence he/she may wish to add to the Professional Promotion Documentation. A final recommendation must be rendered within four working days following this consultation. The Committee then forwards a letter of recommendation/justification to the Dean and Director for their re-evaluation of the case.

In addition, any candidate may file a grievance following University procedures should he/she feel a procedure or process error has occurred during the review process for promotion.

II. Promotion Timeline

Extension professionals may apply for advancement to the next level at any time. It is the responsibility of the individual to follow the timetable identified below.

By September 1: The candidate submits letter of intent to seek promotion to the Director and his/her immediate supervisor.

October: The Professional Review Committee is appointed.

The candidate, in consultation with supervisor, selects members of their Candidate’s Peer Committee and secures their agreement to serve.

November: Candidate submits Professional Promotion Document to his/her supervisor and their Candidate’s Peer Committee.

By Mid December: The Candidate’s Peer Committee sets mutually agreeable schedule for completing the process.

By January 15: The Director receives the Professional Promotion Document and recommendation from the chair of the Candidate’s Peer Committee.

February: The Director forwards the Professional Promotion Document and recommendation to the Dean.
March: The Dean, in collaboration with the Director, sends a report regarding the final decision to the candidate. In cases when a negative decision has been rendered, a letter must be sent to the candidate delineating a detailed list of reasons why.

The candidate who receives a negative decision may request that the Professional Review Committee review the decision. They also have an opportunity to enhance or clarify the content of the Professional Promotion Document based on the reasons listed in the letter announcing the negative decision.

Appeals to the Professional Review Committee must be made in writing within two weeks of notification of a negative decision. The committee must submit its recommendation to the Dean and Director within two weeks of the initiation of the appeal. The Dean and Director consider any new evidence and the recommendation of the Professional Review Committee and render their final decision in writing to the candidate.

April: The Dean sends the Professional Promotion Document, recommendations, and other appropriate materials to the Provost for final approval.

May 1: Official notice is sent to the candidates.

July 1: Promotions are effective.

III. Promotion Related Responsibilities

A. The Candidate’s responsibilities and/or options are to:

1. Review the lists of characteristics for the various ranks to determine eligibility for promotion (See Appendix ‘A’ for Characteristics of Positions).

2. By September 1, submit intent to seek promotion to the Director and immediate supervisor and subsequently meet with immediate supervisor to choose and secure members of Candidate’s Peer Committee.

3. During November, prepare and submit Professional Promotion Documentation (See page 3 and Appendix ‘B’) to supervisor and Candidate’s Peer Committee.

4. By mid-December, set mutually agreeable schedule for meeting with Candidate’s Peer Committee to discuss the Professional Promotion Document and promotion process.

5. Appeal a negative decision rendered by the Dean and Director to the Professional Review Committee within two weeks of notice. This appeal should be made in writing to the Director and chairperson of the Professional Review Committee within two weeks followed by a meeting with the Professional Review Committee that is to occur within ten days from the start of the appeal process. Along with the Dean, re-evaluate the evidence and render a final decision.

7. File a grievance following the University grievance procedures should he/she feel a procedural or process error occurred.

8. Withdraw from the promotion process at any point.
B. The Candidate’s Peer Committee Responsibilities

1. Meet with candidate to:
   
a. (By mid-December), set mutually agreeable schedule for completing the process.
   
b. Discuss the Professional Promotion Document.
   
c. Request evidentiary material and ask questions as needed to evaluate performance.

2. As a committee:
   
a. Reconvene to carefully consider the promotion of the candidate based upon his/her qualifications and evaluation of evidentiary material.
   
b. By majority vote, determine recommendation for advancement of the candidate.
   
c. By January 15, send letter to the Director recommending advancement or prepare letter detailing reasons for denial should a negative decision be rendered.

C. The Professional Review Committee Responsibilities

1. At first meeting, elect by majority vote a Chairperson for a two year term. The Chairperson shall not succeed himself or herself.

2. As a standing body, assist in the development of and in offering career development opportunities for Extension staff wanting to pursue promotion. These sessions should be designed to help candidates prepare their Professional Promotion Document and to help supervisors facilitate promotion-related activities.

3. Within ten days of written request from a candidate who has received a negative decision, schedule a meeting with the candidate to reevaluate his/her Professional Promotion Document.
   
a. Within two weeks of the rendering of a negative decision and the receipt of written notification, the candidate must submit a written request to the Chairperson of the Professional Review Committee for a review of the decision.
   
b. Request from the candidate any additional evidence that would enhance justification for his/her promotion and respond to questions raised in letter of request for review of the decision. The committee should add this information to the Professional Promotion Document and application for promotion.
   
c. Consult with the candidate and/or supervisor regarding the additional evidence within 10 working days from the time the candidate submits a written request for appeal.
   
d. Render written final decision within four days following consultation.
   
e. Forward recommendation and letter of justification to the Dean and Director no later than two weeks following the candidate’s initiation of the appeal process.
D. The Director of Extension Responsibilities:

1. During October, appoint members of the Professional Review Committee members.

2. By January 15, receive the Professional Promotion Document and recommendation from the Candidate’s Peer Committee Chair.

3. During February, forward the Professional Promotion Document and recommendations to the Dean.

4. Collaborate with the Dean in preparing a separate recommendation following review of the candidate's Professional Promotion Document and Candidate’s Peer Committee recommendation.

5. Send letter with the recommendation to the candidate in March. If a negative decision has been rendered, the letter to the candidate should contain a detailed list of reasons as to why such a decision was made.

6. If the candidate makes an appeal to the Professional Review Committee, immediately forward to the chairperson of that committee the candidate's Professional Promotion Document and a letter detailing the reasons for the negative decision.

7. Obtain written notification of the decision from the Professional Review Committee within two weeks of the start of the appeal process. Along with the Dean, re-evaluate the evidence and render a final decision.

8. For candidates who receive a positive recommendation, send his/her Professional Promotion Document along with letters of recommendation to the Dean. The Dean forwards these materials to the Provost for final approval.

IV. Evaluation Criteria

Each category includes several areas for evaluation. Activities are given as examples to illustrate the types of activities that could be included in each area. It is not intended that a candidate have activities in every area.

A. Extension Teaching and Resident Instruction

Recognized activities under the teaching category include, but are not limited to:

- Planning, adapting, developing, facilitating, conducting, or administering educational programs for clientele and staff
- Managing, assisting, or facilitating educational client interactions - telephone inquiries, one-on-one interactions, demonstrations, tours, etc.
- Delivering resident instruction
- Identifying, analyzing, and leading in regard to critical issues of concern to clientele
- Preparing and presenting reports on results of applied research
- Investigating, implementing, or creating new and innovative procedures for disseminating information, enhancing decision-making skills, or achieving other goals

B. Extension Scholarly Activity and Professional Growth

Recognized activities under the scholarly activity and professional growth category include, but are not limited to:
Developing or adapting educational materials (lesson plans, slides, tapes, video, computer programs, etc.)

Creating Extension publications (writing research articles, newsletters, new articles, columns, program handouts, or other mass media education pieces)

Compiling, processing, and analyzing applied research and/or program/behavioral change data

Evaluating program impacts

Completing applied, demonstration, methodological and evaluation research

Publishing articles in refereed and non-refereed professional publications

Presenting at regional and national professional society meetings or industry and business conferences

Creating innovative programs

Serving as a liaison between the community and the university research community

Developing professional status and continuing professional growth … evidence should be presented regarding the candidate’s:

- Status within their professional field as indicated by membership and offices held in professional societies, professional honors, etc.
- Efforts to improve their status in their professional field
- Attendance/participation at state, regional, national, and international professional meetings

C. Service

Recognized activities under the service and supervision category include, but are not limited to:

- Participation in/on:
  - Extension Associations for Family & Community Education
  - 4-H Foundation Board of Directors/leader of 4-H Club
  - Extension, department, college and or University committees
  - Commodity or user groups
  - Federal, state, local or community agencies
  - International organizations
  - National, regional or state committees
  - Community organizations or committees
  - University of Delaware Agricultural Experiment Station committees or work groups
  - Student Organizations
- Supervising intern/extern and field experiences for students
- Training or managing volunteers
- Operating, maintaining, and designing specialty equipment
- Coordinating activities with research station personnel
- Maintaining work schedules, training volunteers or staff employees, safety equipment training

VI. Appendix ‘A’: University of Delaware Extension Position Descriptions

Documents describing the University of Delaware Extension Associate, Agent, and Specialists position characteristics have been posted on the web at the following URL address (to be added).

VII. Appendix ‘B’: Professional Promotion Document Template

A “Professional Promotion Document Template and Evaluation Criteria” is available on the web at the following URL address (to be added). It is requested that candidates use this template in preparing their promotion document.
Each candidate for promotion should complete his/her Professional Promotion Document in a clear and concise manner. To qualify for promotion, a candidate must show that a majority of duties and responsibilities listed for the position at the next rank/level are currently being performed or that he or she is capable of assuming the added responsibilities. The candidate also will be judged on past job performance, professionalism, and willingness to undertake additional responsibilities. Candidates for promotion should submit information that emphasizes how they are meeting the responsibilities at the next highest rank. Other than specific categories (e.g., education degrees earned, certifications achieved, awards, or other unique and important achievements), the focus of the document should be on the previous three to five year period.

The Professional Promotion Document Template and Evaluation Criteria document is designed for the candidate to enter information concerning their current position (title and rank); name, address, and phone number; choices for the Candidate’s Peer Committee; qualifications; special and other requirements; and other pertinent information. The majority of the information entered will fall under the Extension teaching and resident instruction, scholarship activity and professional growth, and service. The most recent accomplishments in these areas are keys to promotion. Candidates are encouraged to summarize past achievements rather than provide long lists of similar activities.