



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Policy on the Appointment, Evaluation, and Promotion (AEP) of Professional Track Faculty

Last Rev. 24 April 2025

In 2015, the UM Senate passed new guidelines for appointment, review and promotion of Professional Track (PTK) faculty. The campus Appointment, Evaluation, and Promotion (AEP) manual that is derived from those policies was created in 2024 with an effective date of July 1, 2025. In response, UMD administration has asked Schools and Colleges to update their policies or create new policies for the appointment and promotion of PTK faculty in compliance with updated University policies and procedures. Accordingly, this document specifies updated procedures for the appointment, review, and promotion of professional track faculty members in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and University of Maryland Extension (UME) who (1) have salaried appointments and (2) are neither tenured nor eligible for tenure. This plan will update the [AGNR plan of governance](#) and be included as an appendix therein.

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I. Introduction

A. Purpose and scope

This policy provides a set of consistent expectations and recommendations for the appointment, evaluation, and promotion (AEP) of Professional Track (PTK) faculty across all departments and units in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR). Further, this policy reiterates campus directives that all PTK faculty receive timely and useful mentoring, access to relevant information and resources, and recognition of their professional accomplishments.

AGNR unit¹ chairs and unit AEP committees are responsible for faculty appointments, faculty mentoring, and faculty promotions of professional track faculty. PTK faculty shall have majority voting representation on College of AGNR committees that are responsible for the creation, adoption, and revision of AGNR policies and procedures related to appointment, evaluation, and promotion of PTK faculty. The AGNR Dean's office and the UMD Office of Faculty Affairs will review and approve all department and unit-level AEP policies to ensure unit compliance with campus-level guidance.

B. Alignment with College of AGNR and University of Maryland Policies and Procedures

All policies stated below align with relevant College of AGNR and University of Maryland policies including those specifically outlined below. As policies and guidelines are subject to change, their contents are not repeated in this document.

- [University of Maryland Policy and Procedures on Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Faculty](#) Policy Number: II-1.00(A) (UMD APT Policy)
- [UM Guidelines for Appointment, Evaluation, and Promotion of Professional Track Faculty](#). Passed by the Senate April 23, 2015. Approved by the President May 4, 2015. (UMD AEP Guidelines)
- [UM Manual for the Appointment, Evaluation, and Promotion of Professional Track Faculty](#) (UMD AEP Manual). Effective date: July 1, 2025. Updated periodically.
- [PTK - AEP Forms & Templates](#) (PTK related information is at the bottom of the page)
- [University of Maryland Policy on the Employment of Adjunct Faculty](#) Policy Number: II-1.07(A) (UMD Adjunct Faculty Policy)

Unit faculty and their leadership are responsible for understanding and applying all relevant UMD policies in their promotions policies and processes. PTK faculty are responsible for understanding and working to meet the expectations of all relevant UMD, AGNR, and unit-specific AEP policies.

C. Periodic review

This AEP policy shall be reviewed at least every five years or whenever substantive changes occur at the College or University level.

¹ Unit shall refer to any department, unit, or center within the College of AGNR.

II. Expectations for Unit Policies and Procedures

All units shall write and publish clear policies for the appointment, mentoring, evaluation, and promotion of PTK faculty in accordance with this policy and relevant University policies. Unit policies shall be reviewed at least every five years or when substantive changes occur at the College or University level. Review, revision, and voting on any policies that impact PTK faculty must include the Unit's PTK faculty.

A. Definition of PTK Faculty

Unit plans of organization shall define faculty to include PTK faculty ranks at all levels applicable to the unit. Units do not need to repeat the definitions of each position title and rank that are specified at the campus level, but plans should note which series are used in the unit and how they align with UMD defined PTK title series. The specific faculty title assigned to a PTK position shall be based on the campus definitions of each title and the majority of the appointee's effort, as indicated by the assignments and expectations in the role's Job Description. The rank shall be appropriate given the campus definition and the unit's specific criteria for such rank.

B. Initial Appointments

PTK faculty positions in the College of AGNR shall include clear duties in research, teaching, extension, or program leadership or a combination thereof that will allow for a successful candidate to be promoted to the next level in their title series. There shall be clear alignment between the PTK title series selected for a position and the primary job responsibilities of that position. The AGNR Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, in consultation with the appropriate associate dean(s) for research and/or extension in AGNR, will review those positions appointed to all PTK title series to ensure the position description is appropriate to the title series selected.

Unit policies shall specify the details for the creation and appointment of PTK faculty positions.

1. Initial appointments at the lowest ranks (e.g. Lecturer, Agent Associate, Assistant Research Professor) can occur at all times of the year subject to review by the department chair and Dean of AGNR.
2. Initial appointments at the middle level ranks (e.g. Senior Lecturer, Senior Agent Associate, Associate Research Professor) can occur at all times of the year. Unit recommendations for appointment to second level ranks will be reviewed and approved by the department chair, the department AEP committee, the College AEP committee, and the Dean of AGNR.
3. Appointments to the highest level in PTK ranks (e.g., Principal Lecturer, Principal Agent Associate, Research Professor) begin at the unit level, proceed through the College, and are ultimately reviewed and approved by the Provost. These cases will only be reviewed during the regular review schedules and must be submitted through the online AEP dossier management application by March 1 of a given academic year promotion cycle.

If an appointment to the highest rank is less than 50% FTE, the Dean has the authority to approve/deny the appointment. If the appointment is for 50% FTE or higher, the dossier (with the Dean's recommendation) will be forwarded to the campus PTK review committee.

C. Changing PTK Title Series

In the uncommon instance where a PTK faculty member's title series no longer adequately describes the work that person is doing, it is possible to administratively change the title series with the consent of the unit chair and the Dean of AGNR.

To request a change of title, a faculty member must submit a written request to their Unit Head. The Unit Head may approve the request upon a determination that the PTK faculty member satisfies the qualifications for a new appointment into that title. There should be no expectation on the part of the faculty member that their request for change of title will be granted. The requested change must be a lateral move or change to a lower level in the new series (depending on the qualifications for appointment into the new title series), i.e., the faculty member cannot advance in rank at the same time as a title change (e.g., from a Lecturer to a Clinical Professor; however, a change from Principal Agent Associate to Associate Research Scientist may be possible). Upon approval by the Unit Head, the request will be forwarded to the AGNR Dean for approval.

Upon approval by the Dean, the Unit will process the change in title series in the APA system. A title change is considered a new appointment, thereby requiring the issuance of a new contract and terms (e.g., salary, assigned duties, FTE) by the Unit to the faculty member.

D. Expectations for the evaluation and promotion of PTK faculty in AGNR Units

Unit policies shall specify the procedures and criteria for evaluation, periodic review, and promotion of PTK faculty and the awarding of Emeritus status for highest level PTK faculty. Specifically, policies shall address:

1. Job Description/Documentation of Duties

Unit policies shall specify the creation and periodic review of a PTK faculty member's job description to ensure it accurately describes that person's roles and responsibilities in teaching, research, extension, service, non-extension outreach, and program administration, as applicable. The job description document starts with the original position announcement for the role, but should be updated with any significant changes to the faculty member's work allocation and focus and signed by the supervisor and the PTK faculty member any time a unit offers a new contract to the faculty member, and whenever significant changes to the faculty member's job duties are made. During the promotion review process, the original and any updated job description documents will be the basis for evaluating the quality and quantity of the faculty member's work over the course of the review period.

2. Criteria for promotion

Each unit shall develop written specific criteria for evaluation and promotion within each of the title series that:

- comply with the university definition of the rank;
- are relevant to their unit;
- align with the typical roles in that title series; and
- are consistent with promotability to the middle and highest levels at UMD.

Criteria should make clear the expected contributions and quality/impact of work in each of the candidate's job domains.

This information should be provided to all PTK faculty when they are appointed and whenever the policies are revised. Unit Heads are expected to discuss a promotion plan with PTK faculty members upon their hiring and during their reviews (e.g., annual, merit).

For faculty whose job descriptions are changed, units should modify the promotion criteria for that position to reflect the work apportionment in the updated job description.

3. Timeline for PTK promotions at the unit level

Unit policies will clearly delineate:

- i. Minimum length of service at a rank needed before review can be initiated.
 1. Candidates for promotion should have met University requirements for time in rank, if specified in UMD Policy,, and the unit's promotion criteria for the promotion being sought. Units are strongly encouraged to counsel applicants prior to initiating a full promotions review.
 2. For faculty with greater than 50% but less than 100% FTE appointments, units should define the time in rank expectations for that position. Faculty with <50% FTE appointments are considered adjunct faculty and are promoted according to UMD policy on Adjunct faculty.
- ii. Date by which a candidate must submit a letter of intent for promotion to the Unit Head.
- iii. Date by which promotions materials need to be submitted to the unit AEP committee.
- iv. Date by which the unit-level review will be completed.

4. Materials required for the promotion package

Unit AEP policies will set out the specific requirements for the AEP promotions package. All materials required in the campus AEP Manual and Guidelines and section V of this policy must be included. Units may require additional materials, but the same materials must be required for all cases of the same category of position.

Units are strongly encouraged to have a more senior PTK faculty member (or PTK mentoring committee) review the AEP package before submission at the unit level to ensure that the package follows accepted formats and that candidates' accomplishments are described effectively. Unit policies should clearly explain the logistics of submitting the promotions dossier and supporting materials, including to whom they should be submitted.

5. Unit-level PTK AEP Committee composition

Unit policies must clearly explain which faculty are eligible to participate in the discussion and subsequent voting on a PTK promotions dossier, the minimum number of faculty required to hold a vote on a candidate, and what constitutes a positive vote at the unit level (e.g. simple majority, $\frac{2}{3}$ vote, etc). Every unit level committee shall include PTK representation.

The College will charge the unit review committee to consider candidates within the context of the work expectations in their job descriptions as well as the unit's specific criteria for promotion.

Visiting faculty and part-time faculty (under 50% FTE at the University of Maryland) cannot participate in meetings voting on the promotion or appointment of PTK faculty.

Faculty with Emeritus designations may attend AEP committee meetings and comment; they cannot vote, however, unless they have a current appointment at the University of Maryland.

6. Unit chair's independent review of candidates

Unit policies should lay out the expectations of the unit-head's review of the candidate which shall take place concurrent with that unit's AEP committee evaluation. Once unit-level committee and chair reviews have been completed, dossiers will be sent to the Dean of the college for review.

7. When a candidate has a dual or joint appointment in more than one unit, the unit of the lesser appointment should be advisory to the unit of primary appointment for the purposes of promotion. The unit of greater appointment will conduct the first-level review and submit a committee evaluation and an independent chair's evaluation to the College AEP committee.

8. Units policies will specify an appeals process for negative decisions that complies with the procedures established by the Provost's Office of Faculty Affairs. Note that negative

decisions for promotion do not preclude renewal of the existing PTK appointment.

E. Mentoring

Unit-level AEP plans shall include a mentoring plan or a link to a separate document detailing a mentoring plan for PTK faculty. The plan should specify how often a mentor-mentee should meet, documentation requirements, and the duration of the mentoring relationship. At a minimum, all PTK faculty members shall be mentored until their successful promotion to the mid-level rank. Additionally, units are encouraged to recommend campus-wide mentoring programs to their PTK faculty (e.g. ADVANCE, PTK Symposium mentoring program).

F. Periodic Performance Review

Unit-level AEP plans shall include a provision for the periodic review of all PTK faculty at all ranks on a minimum of a yearly basis. It is recommended that this review take place at the same time of year as the contract renewal process.

G. Contract Management

The unit will use the University's contract management system to ensure that all contracts contain necessary elements, including a clear description of assignments and expectations of the role.

H. Access to policies and information

All new PTK hires will receive a copy of the unit's and College's evaluation and promotion policy at the time of hiring. Additionally, all new PTK hires will be provided with onboarding materials that orient them to campus PTK resources such as the ADVANCE program, the yearly campus PTK forum, and UMD-wide mentoring programs.

III. College and Campus PTK Promotion Review Process

A. AGNR AEP Committee

The AGNR PTK AEP Committee will evaluate candidates and make a recommendation to the Dean regarding the candidate's promotion.

1. Composition

Committees shall, to the extent possible, be comprised of AGNR PTK faculty. PTK Faculty from other colleges may serve on this committee if the committee cannot be filled from within the college. At a minimum, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the committee shall be PTK faculty.

Visiting faculty and part-time faculty (under 50% FTE at the University of Maryland) cannot participate in meetings voting on the promotion or appointment of PTK faculty.

At least three committee members shall vote on a promotions package for it to advance in the promotions process.

The AGNR Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs will appoint faculty to this committee in consultation with the departments.

2. Voting Eligibility

Committee members shall be at or above the rank of the promotion being sought to vote on a promotions package. If tenure track faculty serve on a review committee, then their ranks must align with the level of the promotion being sought.

<u>Level</u>	TTK Rank	PTK Rank
First/ Entry	Assistant Professor / Agent	Lecturer, Assistant Research Professor, Agent Associate, etc.
Second/ Middle	Associate Professor / Senior Agent	Senior Lecturer, Associate Research Professor, Senior Agent Associate, etc.
Third/ Highest	Professor / Principal Agent	Principal lecturer, Research Professor, Principal Agent Associate, etc.

A faculty member may vote on a promotion package only once. A faculty member who has provided an evaluation letter for a promotions candidate cannot vote on the dossier of that candidate as well.

3. Term

When feasible, committee members from within AGNR will serve a two-year term with approximately half of the committee membership being replaced each year.

4. Charge

The AGNR Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs will charge the committee to evaluate the candidate's promotion package within the context of the expectations in their job descriptions as well as the unit/department/center's criteria for promotion.

5. Voting procedures

Only committee members who participate in the meeting are eligible to vote. Committee members can participate in meetings in person or remotely (e.g., Zoom, MS Teams).

A simple majority of voting members constitutes a positive AEP committee vote at the

College level; however, vote tallies shall be recorded on the transmittal form and negative votes may be reflected in decisions at higher review levels. In agreement with the UM AEP guidelines, “voluntary abstentions are to be discouraged.”

6. The committee will write a concise summary of the discussion and vote tally on each candidate. For candidates for promotion to the highest levels, this letter will become part of the promotions dossier that is sent to the Provost.

B. Dean’s review

The Dean’s review of candidates for promotion will take place after the college’s AEP committee evaluation of the candidate. Decisions for promotions to the second level will receive final approval from the Dean of AGNR.

C. Campus review

Promotions to the highest level of a title series and for awarding Emeritus status will move forward to the campus PTK review committee with final approval from the Provost.

D. Salary

Title changes and salary increases associated with promotion will take effect in the following academic year. According to University policy, minimum salary increases shall be set annually by the College. A unit may go beyond the minimum, but it must be consistent for all candidates at a given rank within a title series in any year.

The College of AGNR will share the minimum salary increase for PTK promotions with unit chairs and the AGNR Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs by June 30th of each year for candidates being considered in the following fiscal year.

E. Appeals

In the event of a negative decision, the faculty member can appeal the decision based on alleged violations of procedural process that would have had a material effect on the decision. All appeals shall be handled according to the procedures established by the Provost’s Office of Faculty Affairs and shall be initiated within the period defined in those procedures. For PTK faculty appointments that do not have maximum terms, a negative decision regarding an application for promotion does not automatically preclude renewal or the existing professional track appointment.

IV. PTK Promotions Timeframe

Any candidate wishing to be considered for promotion must initiate the process by making a formal request to his or her department chair or unit/center director.

- A. Each year, the College will notify units of the submission process for PTK dossiers, including the format of the submission and the person to whom submissions should be sent, by July 1st.
- B. Promotion reviews should occur on a standard schedule, roughly tracking the regular APT schedule in the academic year. The College will publish its AEP review timeline when it publishes the submission process.
 - 1. Promotions to Associate or Senior level will be reviewed at both the unit-level and the college-level. The Dean will make a final decision and the candidate will be notified in writing within 10 business days of the college level review.
 - 2. Promotions to the highest level will be forwarded to a review committee constituted by the Office of the Provost., who will make the final decision. The Provost will notify the candidate in writing after the campus level review.
- C. Once made, promotions cannot be rescinded.

V. PTK Dossier and Promotions Package Components

Unit policies must clearly specify what materials comprise their promotion dossier, teaching portfolio, and supplemental materials, which may exceed the requirements given below. The content and format of the promotions dossier and supporting elements are provided on the [UMD faculty affairs website](#) and should be carefully followed.

- A. The following materials **shall** be included in **all** AGNR promotion dossiers:
 - 1. Transmittal form
 - 2. Candidate verification page
 - 3. Curriculum vitae– must be in the University-approved [template](#).
 - 4. Personal statement of five pages or fewer
 - 5. Summary statement of professional achievements from the candidate's unit.
 - 6. Documentation of duties/responsibilities as provided in the candidate's Job Description, including any subsequent revisions from the candidate's unit reviewed and signed by the candidate.
 - 7. Unit promotion criteria
 - 8. First level AEP committee report
 - 9. Unit head's report
- B. The following optional materials **can** be included in **any** candidate promotions package/dossier:
 - 1. COVID impact statement
 - 2. Rejoinder from candidate (if applicable)

3. Minority report (if applicable)
4. Teaching statement
5. Mentoring, advising, and research supervision

C. The following materials **shall** be included in candidate promotions packages **according to the expected job responsibilities of the position**:

1. Instruction
 - a. *Dossier*
 - i. Student Course Experiences Data
 - ii. Peer Evaluations of Teaching
 - b. *Teaching Portfolio*
2. Research
 - a. *Dossier*
 - i. Reputation of publication outlets from the candidate's unit.
3. Extension
 - a. *Dossier*
 - i. Peer Evaluations of Curriculum development, teaching, or other instructional efforts, as appropriate to the position.
 - ii. Student Course Experiences Data or Program Evaluation Data, as appropriate to the position.
 - b. *Teaching/Extension Portfolio*

D. In addition to the materials specified in parts A-C of this section, the following materials **shall** be included in **all** candidate dossiers **for promotion to the highest level** in that series.

1. Three Evaluation Letters- Letters from three evaluators will be sought by the unit AEP Committee only for promotion to the highest rank in each series. No other letters of support will be allowed in the package. At least one letter shall be from an evaluator external to the candidate's unit.
 - i. For research PTK candidates, at least one letter shall be from an evaluator who is external to the University of Maryland.
2. Credentials of Evaluators- Evaluators will be faculty above the candidate's rank in a corresponding academic title series, or in a leadership position of a program or organization outside academia. Unit policy shall define what constitutes qualifications needed in order for an external evaluator to be considered at or above the candidate's rank and can specify any additional requirements for the credentials of external evaluators.

An evaluator from UMD may not vote on the promotions dossier of a candidate for whom

they provided an evaluation letter.

3. Evaluator selection: Candidates and unit AEP committees will each provide the names and bios for 3 evaluators to the unit chair for consideration. At least 1 evaluator will be selected from the candidate's recommendations.
4. Evaluator review processes and timelines shall follow university AEP guidelines.

E. The following materials **shall** be included in candidate dossiers for the awarding of **Emeritus status**

1. Transmittal form
2. Department Chair's or Unit/Center Director's Letter
3. Department/Unit/Center AEP report
4. Letter of Resignation/Retirement
5. Retirement Agreement (if applicable)
6. Benefits Office Memo
7. Curriculum Vitae

Acknowledgements

In fall 2024 and spring 2025, a committee of five PTK and three TTK faculty from across AGNR worked on the revisions to this policy. That committee included

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position and Department</u>	<u>Title</u>
Sarah Balcom, Chair	Assistant Dean, AGNR Academic Programs	Principal Lecturer
Andrew Baldwin	Environmental Science and Technology	Professor
Paul Goeringer	Agricultural and Resource Economics	Principal Faculty Specialist
Joanna Goger	Environmental Science and Policy	Principal Lecturer
Elizabeth Hill	Kent Co. 4-H Youth Development	Principal Agent Associate
Maile Neel	Plant Science & Landscape Architecture	Professor
Jacqueline Urban Takacs	Associate Director, University of Maryland Extension	Principal Agent Emerita
Margaret Udahogora	Nutrition and Food Science	Senior Lecturer

Joe Sullivan, AGNR Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Faculty Affairs, charged the committee and advised it. Ursula Gorham, Associate Director for Faculty Initiatives in the Office of Faculty Affairs, provided feedback on the near-final draft.