

SRSU Policy: Employment and Status Requirements for Faculty
SRSU Policy ID: FH 2.02
Policy Reviewed by: Executive Vice President and Provost
Approval Authority: President of the University
Approval Date: February 22, 2024
Next Review Date: February 22, 2029

In accordance with the Board of Regents of the Texas State University System's desire "to maintain learned faculties who, by precept and example, will instruct and inspire their students and reflect credit upon the Component" universities (Section 4.11 of *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*), Sul Ross State University requires the following for faculty employment and status:

A. Employment Requirements

Faculty may be employed under one of six categories. The initial appointment of a faculty member to an academic rank will adhere to the following criteria:

Faculty Ranks

1. Professor

The earned terminal degree in one's field or equivalent, a minimum of five years at the rank of associate professor, and a minimum of ten years' teaching experience at the college or university level or the equivalent as defined by the academic department are required. In addition, faculty considered for this rank must demonstrate teaching excellence, dedication to and growth in the profession, and scholarship or performing artistry.

2. Associate Professor

The earned terminal degree in one's field or equivalent and a minimum of five years at the rank of assistant professor are required.

3. Assistant Professor

The earned terminal degree in one's field or equivalent is required for appointment to the rank of assistant professor.

4. Instructor

The master's degree with a major in the appropriate teaching field is required for appointment to the rank of instructor. This is the lowest tenure-track rank.

5. Lecturer

The rank of lecturer is for a temporary, non-tenure-track position implying no obligation beyond the designated term specified in the appointment letter.

Employment is based on departmental needs.

6. Terminal-Degree Equivalency

In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline may be presented in lieu of formal academic preparation. Such cases must be documented and justified in writing by the appropriate departmental chair, college dean, and the executive vice president and provost. Such documentation and justification will be a part of the individual's permanent file.

B. English-Language Proficiency

Texas Education Code Policy

As an institution of higher education in the State of Texas, Sul Ross State University is required to certify upon hiring that all faculty members, both part-time and full-time, are proficient in the English language, in compliance with HB 638 Texas Education Code, Section 51.917.

Section 51.917 FACULTY MEMBERS; USE OF ENGLISH of the Texas Education Code reads, in part, as follows:

- (1) "Faculty member means a person who teaches a course offered for academic credit by an institution of higher education, including teaching assistants, instructors, lab assistants, research assistants, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors."
- (2) "The governing board of each institution of higher education shall establish a program or a short course the purpose of which is to:
 - (a) assist faculty members whose primary language is not English to become proficient in the use of English; and
 - (b) ensure that courses offered for credit at the institution are taught in the English language and that all faculty members are proficient in the use of the English language

In addition, Section 51.917 states that

- (c) "A faculty member may use a foreign language to conduct foreign language courses designed to be taught in a foreign language.

- (d) This section does not prohibit a faculty member from providing individual assistance during course instruction to a non-English-speaking student in the native language of the student."

Procedure for Proficiency Certification

It is the responsibility of academic deans and department chairs to assess and certify the English proficiency of all faculty, according to the following procedure:

- (1) The chair of the department from which the employment recommendation originates shall provide to the appropriate college dean a written statement that the person being recommended for employment has been assessed for English-language proficiency. The following template may be used:

I have assessed the proficiency of _____ in using English to instruct students in courses or laboratories that he [or she] conducts for this department and have found that he [or she] can clearly express himself [or herself] in the English language and is qualified to fulfill his [or her] teaching assignment.

This assessment may be made by observing an applicant's English proficiency in personal conversation, in departmental interviews, or in any oral presentations required for the application or by any other method, such as testing, that the departmental chair or the college dean deems necessary, in accordance with Section 51.917.

- (2) Each written recommendation for the employment of both full-time and part-time faculty will bear a certification from the appropriate college dean that the English-language proficiency of the person being recommended has been evaluated and that the person is qualified to fill the vacant position.

Program for Lack of Proficiency

As specified above, Section 51.917 of the Texas Education Code requires that "The governing board of each institution of higher education shall establish a program or a short course the purpose of which is to: (1) assist faculty members whose primary language is not English to become proficient in the use of English; and (2) ensure . . . that all faculty members are proficient in the use of the English language, as determined by a satisfactory grade on the 'Test of Spoken English' of the Educational Testing Service or a similar test approved by the board."

Should it be determined by the appropriate college dean and departmental chair that a prospective faculty member is not in compliance with the requirement for English-language proficiency, the college dean or departmental chair may require that the prospective faculty member prove their language proficiency by one of the testing

methods specified in Section 51.917 before the proficiency certification described above is completed.

In accordance with Section 51.917, the prospective faculty member shall bear the cost of testing.

C. Graduate Faculty Status

The Graduate Faculty is involved in the University's graduate program at Sul Ross State University through graduate teaching, by directing or administering graduate work, by doing research, or by making other direct and substantial contributions to the graduate program.

Criteria for Membership on the Graduate Faculty

Membership on the Graduate Faculty at Sul Ross State University represents recognition of the individual members as professionals in their disciplines who possess a high degree of competence and who are respected for their capabilities. In working with graduate students, they are expected to demonstrate through effective teaching and professional conduct an appreciation for high standards of scholarship, a commitment to qualitative practices, and an appreciation for learning at the highest levels.

Graduate Faculty members are approved by the president based on the recommendations of the executive vice president and provost and the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council will consider faculty members for approval to the Graduate Faculty who are recommended in writing to that body by their respective department chairperson and college dean.

There are two categories of membership on the Graduate Faculty: Full Graduate Faculty and Associate Graduate Faculty. The requirements for admissions and being retained on the Graduate Faculty are listed under each category.

1. Full Graduate Faculty

- a) Faculty members appointed to full graduate-faculty status must possess terminal degrees or the equivalent in their professional discipline, must be full-time employees of the university or hold status as emeritus faculty, and must teach at least one graduate-level course (not including arranged- or independent-study course) in a degree program during a two-year period.
- b) Faculty members appointed to full graduate status also must demonstrate satisfactory performance in at least one of the following:

- (1) Substantial participation with demonstrated competence in a graduate-degree program in an academic department or division of the university as demonstrated in the teaching of graduate-level courses, serving as an advisor to graduate students, serving as a member of students' committees, and other functions which may be consistent with the graduate program and the needs of students and the academic department.
 - (2) Evidence of research competence or artistic creativity as exemplified by publications, works of art, professional experience, or other scholarly activities which are commonly recognized in the faculty member's discipline and by peers in the discipline.
- c) On an annual basis, the department chair will review with the members of the graduate faculty of the department the status of faculty not members of the graduate faculty. The chair will forward recommendations for additions to the college dean who will forward both the departmental recommendation and their recommendation to the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council will make recommendations to the executive vice president and provost. If the Graduate Council recommends the rejection of a nomination, it must do so in writing with a statement of reasons. The concerned faculty member, chair, and college dean may appeal the decision to the executive vice president and provost. The vice president and provost's decision will be final.

Faculty members who fail to maintain the requirements of full graduate-faculty status as determined by the academic administrators in the departments or colleges in which they teach and by the Graduate Council shall have the right to be reconsidered for full membership at such time as they shall be judged again to be in compliance with the requirements.

2. Associate Graduate Faculty

- a) For admission to associate graduate-faculty status, faculty members must be employees of the university who are expected by the departments of the university in which they teach to teach at least one graduate-level

course in a degree program within a three-year period.

- b) Faculty members appointed to associate graduate-faculty status must present evidence of competence to teach graduate-level courses by virtue of experience and/or scholarly and creative activity in their professional discipline.
- c) Appointments to associate graduate-faculty status are made each semester and are not carried forward to subsequent semesters. Each semester, shortly after the twelfth class day, the deans of the colleges will submit recommendations, based on nominations by department chairs, to the Graduate Council of faculty members who are to be placed on the associate list for that semester. These recommendations will be considered by the Graduate Council and recommended by the council to the executive vice president and provost. In the event of negative recommendations by the council, the same procedure will be followed to resolve them as in the case of nominations for full graduate-faculty status, with the decision of the executive vice president and provost, if required, being final.

Under special circumstances, the Graduate Council can recommend that a faculty member who does not meet the above qualifications be allowed to teach graduate courses. A written request must come from the department chair stating why the request is being made and including the individual's qualifications. Such permission will be considered as valid until the next evaluation of the membership of the Graduate Faculty. Visiting faculty may be included on the Graduate Faculty.

D. Emeritus and Distinguished Emeritus Faculty

Procedures governing the recognition of emeritus and distinguished emeritus faculty are stated in the *Rules and Regulations, Texas State University System*, Chapter V, paragraph 4.94. Those procedures and requirements read as follows:

"Emeritus (or Distinguished Emeritus) Status. The President of each Component is authorized to bestow the following titles upon retired or retiring faculty:

- (1) Professor *Emeritus*, Distinguished Professor *Emeritus*, or similar honorific titles, provided that the faculty member has served the Component, with distinction, at that rank at least ten years.

(2) Associate Professor *Emeritus*, provided that the faculty member has served the Component, with distinction, at that rank at least fifteen years.

Except for Regents' Professors and University Distinguished Professors, the conferring of *emeritus* status is not automatic upon retirement but shall be based upon individual distinction, exceptionally high-quality service, and outstanding contributions to the Component which clearly demonstrate the individual's worthiness for the honor conferred."