



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Operating Policy and Procedure

**OP 64.10: Graduate Faculty**

**DATE:** March 8, 2024

**PURPOSE:** This Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) outlines the roles and responsibilities of graduate faculty along with the criteria for membership in the graduate faculty.

**REVIEW:** Guidelines for graduate faculty membership are set by the Graduate Council, although departments and colleges may develop their own specific criteria for membership within the more general Graduate School guidelines. Both Graduate School and departmental (or collegiate) guidelines may be changed at any time, subject to the approval of the Graduate Council. The Graduate School policy regarding graduate faculty membership will be reviewed by the Dean of the Graduate School in October of even-numbered years with substantive revisions forwarded to the Provost and Senior Vice President.

**POLICY/PROCEDURE**

**1. Roles and Responsibilities of Graduate Faculty Members**

Graduate faculty membership is a means of recognizing members of the faculty for scholarly activities, creativity, direction of graduate research and study, and other contributions to the graduate programs. Therefore, such membership is neither pro forma nor automatic.

Graduate faculty are involved in the following:

- a. Developing policies and procedures related to graduate education;
- b. Reviewing and making recommendations on applications for admission to graduate certificate and degree programs;
- c. Teaching graduate courses;
- d. Serving as graduate program directors;
- e. Advising students on curricular matters;
- f. Participating in qualifying, comprehensive, and other examinations, in alignment with terminal degree expertise;
- g. Directing graduate students in their research and creative activities;
- h. Serving as chair on master's and doctoral committees, in alignment with terminal degree expertise;

- i. Serving as member or co-chair on master's and doctoral committees; and
- j. Serving as the Graduate Dean's representatives at doctoral dissertation defenses.

No member of the graduate faculty shall chair the advisory committee directing a student to a degree higher than the level of the highest degree earned by the member of the faculty.

## 2. Criteria for Membership

The criteria for membership on the graduate faculty include both university-wide and departmental (or collegiate in the case of some colleges) standards. The university-wide criteria for membership are as follows:

- a. Possession of the terminal academic degree in the field or recognition for substantive and distinctive contributions to the discipline involved. For individuals in the process of obtaining a terminal degree, certification by their graduate school that all requirements for the degree have been met will be treated as equivalent to possession of the degree.
- b. Evidence of current interest and involvement in scholarly research and/or creative activity.
- c. Successful experience in the teaching, counseling, and/or direction of students at the graduate level. This requirement does not apply to individuals who have recently completed their terminal degrees.

Similarly, departments (or colleges) may have specific guidelines for graduate faculty membership within the general university-wide criteria listed above.

## 3. Graduate Faculty Membership

- a. All members of the full-time tenure/tenure-track faculty of graduate degree-conferring units of Texas Tech University become members of the graduate faculty upon appointment to the university unless the Graduate School receives notification from the college of the faculty member that he or she should not be included—e.g., because they do not satisfy the *Criteria for Membership* (see section 2).
- b. Faculty with other types of appointments at Texas Tech University (e.g., professors of practice, research faculty, adjunct or visiting faculty, faculty with administrative assignments and/or ex officio appointments, international exchange faculty) may be conferred graduate faculty membership upon nomination by their academic department, unit, or college. If approved by the Graduate Council, the individual will be designated as adjunct graduate faculty. Depending on the extent they meet the criteria in section 2 (above), individuals will be permitted to:
  - (1) Participate in qualifying, comprehensive, and other examinations;
  - (2) Direct graduate students in their research and creative activities;
  - (3) Serve as co-chair on master's and doctoral committees;
  - (4) Serve as a member of master's and doctoral committees;

- (5) Teach graduate courses related to their discipline; and
- (6) Serve as the Dean's representative on doctoral dissertation defenses.

Nominations are reviewed by the Graduate Faculty subcommittee of the Graduate Council and approved by majority vote by the Graduate Council. Approval is for a maximum of five years aligning with the department/unit's graduate program review cycle, but individuals may be nominated for continued appointments subject to approval by the Graduate Council.

Any additional restrictions upon duties performed by such faculty beyond those stated in this policy should be stated by the department or unit chair on the application form. Conversely, for those duties that are not restricted, the application form should present strong reasons why graduate faculty status should be conferred. Professors of practice who teach, for example, should be individuals whose extensive professional experience makes them valuable for teaching select profession-oriented courses.

- c. Faculty who have retired from Texas Tech University appointments may apply for continuation as graduate faculty members subject to recommendation by the department and approval by the academic dean and Graduate Council. Upon retirement, the individual can no longer serve as sole chair of a master's or doctoral committee nor teach graduate courses. Any additional restrictions upon duties performed by such faculty should be stated by the department or unit chair on the application form.

#### **4. Exceptions for Specific Duties**

Those faculty members who are not appointed to the graduate faculty of Texas Tech University may not serve as instructors of record for graduate-level courses, including tandem courses, nor participate in comprehensive/qualifying exams/advisory committees for either master's or doctoral students. This includes individuals who had graduate faculty status but left Texas Tech University for other employment. Exceptions for the requirement to be a member of the graduate faculty may be granted for the following circumstances:

- a. Teaching Waiver

Exceptions may be made to teach graduate courses under unusual circumstances and then only upon recommendation of the administrator of the instructional unit and with subsequent approval of the Dean of the Graduate School or designee. Requests should be made for specific courses only, be based on unusual programmatic need, and indicate the qualifications for the individual for whom a request is made. Approvals are granted for a two-year period but can be renewed.

- b. Advisory Committee Membership

Exceptions may be granted by the Dean of the Graduate School for individuals serving on advisory committees (but not as chair) when their expertise clearly is required for enhancement of this student's scholarship. Such exemption may be extended to individuals internal or external to Texas Tech. There may be no more than one non-graduate faculty member on a given advisory committee. Requests are made by the chair of the student's master's/doctoral committee to the Dean of the Graduate School. Approvals are student-specific.

c. Direction of Non-thesis Students in a Terminal Master's Degree Program

Faculty with a master's degree only can supervise non-thesis students to degree completion in a terminal master's degree program in which the faculty member is certified to teach upon recommendation of the administrator of the instructional unit and with subsequent approval of the Dean of the Graduate School or designee. Approvals are granted for a three-year period but can be renewed.

**5. Review of Graduate Faculty Status**

- a. Graduate faculty status must be reviewed periodically, but in no event less than once every five (5) years, by a graduate faculty member's primary academic unit (department, school, area, or college). Such a review must include evaluation of the graduate faculty member's research, creative activity, and involvement in graduate education. In most cases, this review occurs as part of the regular graduate program review cycle. At the request of the Dean of the Graduate School or the graduate faculty member's academic dean with permission from the Dean of the Graduate School, a faculty member's graduate faculty member status may be reviewed independently from a regular graduate program review.
- b. The periodic review described in subsection a. above must be conducted by the graduate faculty members in the graduate faculty member's primary academic unit. To ensure that the evaluation is handled in a fair and thorough manner, a chair, director, or area coordinator from another academic unit will be appointed by the dean as an ex-officio member. If, by a majority vote (by secret ballot) of the graduate faculty members in the graduate faculty member's primary academic unit, the graduate faculty member's research, creative activity, and/or involvement in graduate education is below what is expected of a graduate faculty member, then the faculty member's graduate faculty status review will be deemed to be a negative review and their graduate status may be recommended for suspension.
- c. Any recommendation for suspension of a faculty member from the graduate faculty must be presented to the graduate faculty members in the graduate faculty member's academic unit with evidence of just cause, with the burden of proof on the unit chair of the primary academic unit or college dean.
- d. The graduate faculty member recommended for suspension must be informed of the proceeding described in subsection e. below and allowed to provide a rebuttal (in writing or in person) before the vote.
- e. To recommend suspension of a graduate faculty member's graduate faculty status, the chair, director, or area coordinator of the graduate faculty member who received a negative review as described in subsection b. above must convene a vote (by secret ballot) by the graduate faculty members of the graduate faculty member's primary academic unit. At least a two-thirds vote of the graduate faculty members of the graduate faculty member's primary academic unit is required to recommend suspension. The graduate faculty member being considered for suspension cannot participate in the vote. The result of the vote will be sent by the chair, director, or area coordinator to the Dean of the Graduate School who will communicate the decision regarding suspension of graduate faculty status to the faculty member and the dean of the faculty member's academic college.
- f. Should the faculty member whose graduate faculty status was suspended wish to appeal the decision, they must submit a written appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School within 10

days of receiving notice of the decision. The Dean of the Graduate School will refer the appeal to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Graduate Council. The Academic Affairs Committee will review the appeal and submit its recommendation to the full Graduate Council for a vote on the appeal.

- g. Should a majority vote of the Graduate Council result in the denial of the appeal filed by the faculty member, then termination of graduate faculty status will stand. Should a majority vote of the Graduate Council result in approval of the appeal filed by the faculty member, then the faculty member's graduate faculty status will be reinstated immediately.

[Attachment A: Graduate Faculty Application Form](#)

[Attachment B: Certification of Faculty Qualifications](#)