

PENN STATE MONT ALTO
GUIDELINES FOR HIRING PART-TIME FACULTY
AND FOR REVIEWING NEWLY HIRED
FIXED-TERM FACULTY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that academic excellence and program and course quality are the most important considerations in the hiring of part-time (FT-II) faculty and in reviewing the performance of newly hired fixed-term (FT I, FT II, FTM) faculty to teach credit courses in Resident Instruction (RI) or Continuing Education (CE) at Mont Alto. Since part-time faculty teach about 20% of course offerings at Mont Alto, it is important that searches for part-time faculty be conducted with the same degree of seriousness with which full-time faculty searches are conducted. This is essential to maintaining consistent quality and the proper integration of part-time faculty into the campus community. These guidelines also seek to harmonize part-time faculty hiring practices across all disciplines at Penn State Mont Alto. Moreover, to improve the working conditions of part-time faculty, the campus is committed to providing equitable pay scales, appropriate evaluation procedures, an office with desks, phones, and computers (with Internet access), and professional support such as orientation on performance expectations, curricula, and governance structures.

II. SCOPE OF GUIDELINES

These guidelines only apply to part-time and newly hired fixed-term faculty members. They do not apply to fixed-term faculty members who have already completed one year of service and undergone one annual faculty review at the time of implementation of these guidelines, non-teaching faculty members, or full-time faculty members who teach an overload under a supplemental contract. The types of appointments covered in these guidelines are defined in University Policy HR 06 (<http://guru.psu.edu/policies/OHR/hr06.html>).

III. HIRING OF PART-TIME (FT II) FACULTY

- A. As the registrar works with the Director of Academic Affairs (DAA), the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs (ADAA), and full-time faculty to put together the schedule of courses for each semester, a need might arise to find instructors for courses for which no instructor has been assigned. In such cases, the DAA and ADAA shall work with the DAA's staff assistant to advertise the vacancies in local and regional papers. Attempts also will be made to find full-time faculty who may be able and willing to teach additional classes for overload pay within the letter and spirit of workload guidelines.
- B. Where full-time faculty are not available to teach a course and resumes or *curriculum vitae* (CVs) have been sent by part-time faculty applicants to the Office of Academic Affairs, the ADAA/DAA shall first carefully review credentials for suitability. Part-time faculty must have a minimum of a master's degree in the discipline or a closely related field and/or significant professional experience and qualifications in the discipline or a closely related

discipline and/or the minimum certification for the discipline in which they are being hired to teach (e.g., the CPA).

- C. As a general rule, high school teachers will not be considered for part-time teaching appointments at Mont Alto. Exceptions may be made in unusual cases where, for example, educators have significant experience teaching at other postsecondary institutions or extensive experience in their fields. However, with these exceptions, there should be mentoring/monitoring of instruction to make sure that curricular standards do not suffer.
- D. After the initial review, the ADAA consults with the DAA to determine if a candidate's credentials are indeed suitable. If so, full-time faculty teaching in the discipline or related disciplines are asked to review the curriculum vitae and other credentials of applicants. If the initial reviews by the DAA, ADAA, and full-time faculty are positive, the ADAA will invite the candidate to do a presentation for full-time faculty teaching in the discipline. Faculty from related disciplines or the division in which the discipline is housed may also be invited to view the presentation. The candidate will be asked to select a topic or issue related to the course he/she will be teaching for the presentation. This is intended to simulate a classroom teaching experience as much as possible. Even for applicants with extensive prior teaching experience, this presentation serves several useful purposes. First, it gives our faculty and the candidate a chance to connect. Second, it allows our faculty to evaluate the candidate's understanding regarding the level of the students he or she will be teaching, judging from the nature of the presentation. Third, it allows the candidate's questions to be answered by faculty from different perspectives. Fourth, it ensures that we do not substitute the judgment of students the applicant may have taught at previous institutions for our own by simply

asking for and examining prior student evaluations. The ADAA will facilitate the teaching presentation, which the DAA will attend whenever possible.

The ADAA will discuss salary and other pertinent information on the day of the presentation to ensure that the candidate is still interested, and will indicate to the candidate that a decision will be made and the candidate notified expeditiously.

- E. Faculty members attending the candidate's presentation are asked to send written feedback via email to the ADAA regarding the suitability of the applicant to teach at Penn State Mont Alto. Every effort will be made to ensure that the reviews are requested in good time considering the beginning date for the course, and that they are not requested within the two-week period preceding the commencement of the course for which the candidate is being reviewed.
- F. Even where a candidate is recommended for an appointment, full-time faculty, the ADAA, or DAA may offer feedback on how the candidate may be more effective in his or her teaching, based on observations made during his or her teaching presentation.
- G. Final approval to teach is given by the DAA. If the candidate is approved to teach, a contract will be prepared by the DAA's office. The ADAA will share syllabi and other essential information in the Mont Alto *Faculty Handbook* with the new hire, and the staff assistant will initiate all necessary paperwork for new hires including background checks, and work to have the new hire assigned an email account, a picture ID, a SecurID token, and a key to the part-time faculty office.
- H. The ADAA will assign a full-time faculty member as a mentor to the new hire after consultations with potential mentors, taking into account suitability and availability. Mentors will share information on syllabus and class preparation and other pertinent matters,

including class attendance issues, academic integrity, accommodations for students with disabilities, and grading policies. The DAA's office will also provide copies of model syllabi on file and the *University Handbook for Part-Time Faculty* (available at http://www.psu.edu/dept/vprov/pdfs/pt_faculty_handbook.pdf).

IV. REVIEW OF NEWLY HIRED FIXED-TERM (FTM, FT I) AND PART-TIME (FT II) FACULTY

Newly hired fixed-term faculty will undergo the same teaching review procedures as newly hired part-time faculty, as follows:

- A. Newly hired faculty will go through a mid-semester peer evaluation of teaching. The evaluation will be performed by the mentor assigned to the part-time faculty member. However, other full-time faculty members in the discipline, a related discipline, or the division in which the discipline is housed may also be asked to do a review. The evaluation will seek to elicit objective information about the faculty member's teaching abilities, and thus seek to eliminate as much as possible subjective judgments deriving from biases about different teaching and learning styles.
- B. If the peer review results in recommendations for improvement, then a follow-up review will be done at the end of the first semester to determine the extent to which recommendations have been successfully implemented.
- C. Peer reviews will not be conducted in subsequent years unless necessitated by performance issues that arise later. Thus, under normal circumstances, peer reviews will be conducted only in the first semester of teaching at Mont Alto. Furthermore, alternative evaluations of teaching effectiveness specifically designed for this purpose will be sent in

the summer after the first year of teaching to solicit feedback from students with an opportunity to make open-ended comments that lend deeper insights into student perceptions of teaching effectiveness.

- D. SRTEs will be administered toward the end of each semester (usually two weeks before the end of classes).

V. RETENTION OF PART-TIME (FT II) FACULTY, FIXED-TERM (FTM, FT I) AND STANDING, NON-TENURE SYSTEM FACULTY

- A. The decision as to whether to retain a faculty member (whether part-time, fixed-term, or standing non-tenure) will depend on campus instructional needs, program priorities, budgets, and measures of teaching effectiveness. For part-time faculty, this will include peer reviews of teaching, SRTE scores, alternative student evaluations, and other student feedback received by the DAA or ADAA during the semester. For fixed-term and standing, non tenure-system faculty, this will include the results of the annual faculty performance evaluations.
- B. Whenever possible, part-time faculty shall be given reasonable notice of their retention for a subsequent semester to allow them to plan accordingly. Part-time faculty who will not be retained will also be given reasonable notice and thanked for their service to Penn State Mont Alto. The DAA and ADAA will host a social for part-time faculty at the end of each semester as a way of showing the campus's appreciation for their services as is done for full-time faculty. The social will be held in the evening to allow for maximum participation.

**VI. VOLUNTARY REVIEW OF CURRENT FULL-TIME FIXED-TERM (FTM, FT I)
AND STANDING, NON-TENURE SYSTEM FACULTY**

Current full-time fixed-term and standing, non tenure-system faculty who have been teaching at Penn State Mont Alto for more than a year are not subject to the mandatory review procedures for newly hired fixed-term faculty because they participate in the annual and 5-year extended reviews prescribed by Policy HR 40 (<http://guru.psu.edu/policies/OHR/hr40.html>) and the University College guidelines for implementing them (<http://www.campuses.psu.edu/84.htm>). However, existing fixed-term and standing non-tenure system faculty may request a formative peer review for purposes of providing feedback toward improvement of their teaching. The faculty member may either directly request a peer to conduct such a review or ask the DAA to arrange one.

Initially Endorsed by the Penn State Mont Alto Faculty Senate

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