



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

## Operating Policy and Procedure

### **OP 64.10: Graduate Faculty**

**DATE:** May 6, 2021

**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:

- 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;
- g. directing graduate students in their research and creative activities;
- h. serving as chair on master's and doctoral committees;
- 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 members should be reviewed periodically by their departments and/or colleges. Such a review would include the faculty member's research, creative activity, and involvement in graduate education. In most cases, this review would be done as part of the regular graduate program review cycle.
- b. A request for suspension of a graduate faculty member who receives a negative review must first be voted on by the graduate faculty of the individual's academic unit.
- c. Any recommendation for suspension of a member from the graduate faculty must be presented with evidence of just cause, with the burden of proof on the unit chair or college dean.
- d. The faculty member recommended for suspension must be informed of the vote and allowed to provide a rebuttal (in writing or in person) before any decision is made final.
- e. Should a faculty member receive a negative vote for graduate faculty status in his or her department, unit, or college and wish to appeal that decision, he or she would send such an appeal to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Graduate Council, which would then forward their recommendation to the full body for a vote. The same procedure will apply in cases where a request is made by a department and/or college to remove an individual from the graduate faculty.
- f. Upon a Graduate Council vote to reinstate or grant graduate faculty membership to the individual, the individual's graduate faculty membership role will be reinstated immediately.

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

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