

## Appointments, reappointments and promotions

### *Initial appointment and reappointment of Instructor*

Fellows transitioning to faculty positions may be appointed to the rank of Instructor in Medicine with the approval of the Department Chair. An appointment of Instructor in Medicine requires recommendation by the Division Director and approval of the Department Chair and Associate Dean. This is a one-year appointment and requires annual reappointment. An appointment as Instructor does not require review by COAP.

### *Initial appointment and reappointment of Assistant Professor*

Initial appointments and reappointments will be made in the track and rank that is most appropriate for that individual as determined by the Division Director and the Chair of Medicine . Changing tracks may be justified when an individual has changed the portion of time spent in research, clinical activity, or teaching. Ordinarily, for non-tenure tracks, such a change should be requested at the end of the initial appointment as part of the reappointment process. For tenure track appointments, track changes are generally not considered after the end of the sixth year. The COAP may independently recommend such a change in track based on its review of the candidate's dossier, then reappoint for a one-year interval or not reappoint based on a lack of performance commensurate with track-related expectations. Recommendations not to reappoint, after consultation with the Dean, will result in a letter to the faculty member from the Chair describing the timing of the appointment in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the *Faculty Manual*.

If the COAP identifies a serious deficiency in a candidate's dossier at the time of the reappointment, the COAP Chair will advise the Department Chair and Division Director in writing. Any communication from COAP to the Department Chair and the Division Director should be considered advisory. An important purpose of the letter to the Division is to help the candidate identify and remedy any deficiencies in the dossier prior to the next mandatory review. The language of such letters should be optimistic and informative, thus making it appropriate to share with the candidate should the Chair or Division Director choose to do so. Nevertheless, the content of the letter must convey issues that both the candidate and career mentor can evaluate and find useful in preparation for mandatory review.

### *Letters of New Appointment*

A Division Director authorized to search for new faculty after verbal consultation with the Chair and after a candidate has signed an appointment offer letter with intent to join the faculty initiates a new appointment letter on a special form called the "Chair's Recommendation," which the Chair will sign after indication from COAP that the dossier should go forward. The letter's content should cover five points as separate paragraphs:

- **Job description:** justification for and description of the position.
- **Search process:** the nature of the search process (include copies of advertisements in at least two appropriate journals; ads must include Affirmative Action announcement).
- **Description of the finalist:** a description of the candidate's background and accomplishments emphasizing the preference for this individual over others.
- **Job expectations:** provide a brief description of the expectations of the Division.
- **A responsible supervisor:** provide the name of the individual or program that will be responsible for career development of the proposed faculty member.

Additionally, a financial analysis should be appended to the Chair's Recommendation by submitting a return on investment (ROI) proforma, which the Department's business office can help prepare. This should be done early in the process to evaluate the financial impact of the position.

The Chair will then authorize the completion of an application for the School of Medicine and begin the credentialing process in order for the individual to obtain hospital privileges. Initial appointments at the Assistant Professor level will normally be for three years. Based on the productivity of the individual in question, the COAP will reappoint at the appropriate time depending on faculty track.

New faculty, appointed at the Assistant Professor level in the Basic Science Investigator/Physician-Scientist track, will normally be expected to bring funding for salary at least at the K award level, have at least one significant first-authored paper in the most current area of research, and have ranked highly in a national search. The Department of Medicine and Vanderbilt School of Medicine are committed to hiring the best individuals in the country. Internal candidates must be evaluated against potential external candidates.

### ***Promotions process***

The promotion process is initiated at the Division level in time for thoughtful evaluation. Timing of these reviews depends on faculty track and faculty performance. The timing for consideration will be consistent with the guidelines of the School of Medicine. Normally, a Division Director initiates the promotion process after verbal consultation with the Chair of Medicine. Upon approval of the Chair, the Division Director begins preparation of the promotion dossier. Requirements for the dossier are track dependent. For all tracks, the COAP will review this initial dossier and will recommend that letters of reference be obtained.

When the Department's COAP has reviewed the complete dossier, a vote will be taken and recorded, and the results of the decision will be communicated to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will authorize the decision to be entered into the permanent record or, under special circumstances, will ask the committee to consider additional factors before a final decision is rendered. If approval is granted, the recommendation will then be forwarded to the School of Medicine for final action.

COAP is not obligated to forward any promotion dossier to the School if it feels the application is not outstanding or appropriate; therefore, review may properly end at the Department level.

**Letters.** All letters requesting promotion should be written in a style using the promotion criteria listed below. These letters will come from the Division Director after verbal consultation with the Chair. Such recommendations will be written by the Division Director on a special form called the Chair's Recommendation, which the Chair will sign after indication from COAP that the dossier should go forward. The Chair's Recommendation should reflect the candidate's designated track.

For reappointments without promotion, a formal Chair's Recommendation is not required. Instead, the Division Director should submit a copy of the annual Reappointment Review form (see pages 20-23).

**Promotion Criteria.** The main criteria for promotion are academic excellence, although the COAP also evaluates administrative service and clinical contributions to the Medical Center. Depending on the track, quality and impact of scholarly contributions (e.g. ISI citation frequency and quality of journals), membership in honorary organizations (e.g. ASCI and AAP), significant contributions to professional organizations (study sections, editorial boards, leadership roles in academic societies, etc.), quality of clinical practice, leadership in and contributions to educational programs, teaching excellence, and grants are the major elements underlying the COAP's recommendation. Letters from all referees who evaluate academic contributions are considered carefully. The COAP recognizes the highly individualized nature of academic careers and seeks to identify the unique contributions of each faculty member under review.

### ***Common reasons for failing to achieve promotion***

Division Directors are encouraged to evaluate their faculty critically and to recommend to the COAP only

those candidates who meet the appointment or promotion criteria of the School of Medicine. After a period of evaluation, not all faculty meet criteria for promotion, and recommendation by their Division does not assure success either at the Department COAP or School of Medicine level. Like other research-intensive departments in peer institutions, the reasons for failure vary and are as individualized as each faculty member but tend to fall into several broad categories:

- **Premature request for promotion.** Accelerated promotion is reserved for exceptional, highly productive faculty who have made major academic contributions. Because of the impact of a negative decision, the COAP recommends that Divisions carefully consider a candidate's qualifications before proposing any faculty member for accelerated promotion.
- **Inappropriate track.** Faculty in a track inconsistent with their actual activities have inadequate credentials for promotion.
- **Poor productivity.** Based on the COAP's own review and/or comments from referees, the candidate's academic productivity is inadequate to support promotion. Reasons for deficiencies vary. Common problems might include insufficient standing or level of contribution to the field, lack of independence (especially in tenure and research tracks), publications in low-cited journals, and failure to maintain a consistent publication record. In the Clinician Educator track, poor productivity may reflect inadequate documentation of clinical reputation or teaching excellence, insufficient contributions to scholarship, lack of educational program development and/or leadership, and lack of significant administrative contributions.
- **Inadequate grant support.** For tenure and research track faculty a record of past and current grant support consistent with the specific rank was not evident.