



# **Professorial Career Ladder System for Extension Specialist Faculty**

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
The Texas A&M System**

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## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>TITLES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Titles .....	3
Evaluation Criteria .....	4
Extension .....	4
Scholarly Contributions .....	5
Academic Teaching and Student Mentoring (if applicable) .....	6
Service .....	6
Examples of Materials for Consideration .....	7
<b>STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR PROFESSORIAL RANK</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>17</b>

## Introduction

Faculty in the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service make vital contributions in the areas of Extension, Scholarly Activities, Academic Instruction and Student Mentoring (when applicable) and Service. These activities form the basis of the land-grant university system. Extension faculty are responsible for extending knowledge to the people of Texas through a variety of research-based educational programs that encourage lasting and effective change.

The purpose of this document is to serve as a guide for Extension faculty who are considering promotion within the professorial career ladder system. In this document, you will find detailed information regarding criteria and standards of achievement for those initially appointed to the rank of Associate Professor and for candidates seeking promotion to the ranks of Associate Professor and Professor. The promotion process is multi-layered and involves a faculty member's supervisors (Associate Department Head/Program Leader and Department Head, if applicable), and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Peer Review Committee. In addition to this document, it is the responsibility of the individual faculty member, supervisors, and Peer Review Committee to familiarize themselves with the Guidelines for the Promotion of Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Service Faculty and Joint Appointments document, which provides essential information on the promotion process, timelines, position descriptions, mentoring committees, dossier development, external review letters, promotion committees, joint appointments, appeals process, and mid-term reviews. It is imperative to adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in the aforementioned document, which can be found on the AgriLife Faculty Promotion website:

<https://faculty.aglifesciences.tamu.edu/promotion-tenure/>

To ensure compliance, faculty who are considering promotion in the professorial career ladder system should consult with their Department Head and Associate Department Head or Program Leader well in advance of assembling their promotion dossiers.

## Titles and Evaluation Criteria

### *Titles*

Non-tenured ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor will be assigned to each qualified Extension faculty member. The professorial title will include the rank (e.g., Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor) and "Extension Specialist" and may be followed by a subject matter subtitle. Examples include the following:

- Professor and Extension Poultry Specialist
- Associate Professor and Extension Health Specialist
- Assistant Professor and Extension Forage Specialist

### *Evaluation Criteria*

Extension faculty will be evaluated for promotion based on criteria outlined below and in

accordance with the Guidelines for the Promotion of Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Service Faculty and Joint Appointments document. A promotion dossier contains several key components, including the Candidate Statement on Extension, Scholarly Contributions, Academic Instruction and Student Mentoring (if applicable), and Service; Curriculum Vitae; External Reviewer Letters, etc., which are described in detail in the appendices of the Guidelines for the Promotion of Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Service Faculty and Joint Appointments document.

In putting together a promotion dossier, Extension faculty will reference a wide variety of activities and accomplishments consistent with their position description, including the development, implementation, and evaluation of Extension educational programs, activities supporting the county network, scholarly works, online educational efforts, refereed and/or peer reviewed publications, support of Extension faculty and staff (e.g., agent trainings and support), teaching evaluations, grants and contracts, gifts and in-kind contributions, awards, peer evaluations, leadership roles in professional societies and organizations, service on industry and government advisory/technical committees or review panels, and presentations at professional meetings. It is essential that the faculty member's position description is kept up-to-date and fully describes job expectations. Special emphasis will be placed on a faculty member's quality of work, productivity over time, and impact in the following four areas:

## **1. EXTENSION**

### **Programmatic Development, Implementation, and Evaluation**

Faculty are expected to develop disciplinary and interdisciplinary programming efforts as appropriate to adequately address the priority issues of the clientele and to support the Extension network in addressing these issues. A variety of peer and clientele inputs should be used to guide the content, quality, priority, and emphasis of the Extension faculty member's leadership within their subject-matter discipline. Guidance should reflect the assimilation and synthesis of information from county, regional, and statewide program development committees, clientele needs assessments, trend data, clientele organizations, and key industry leaders relative to the strategic plans of the unit/department, college, and agency.

Timely and effective coordination, cooperation, and scheduling of activities with colleagues and personnel within and outside of Extension, including but not limited to District Extension Administrators, Regional Program Leaders, Associate Department Heads/Program Leaders, other departmental or unit faculty/staff, County Extension agents/staff, and external agencies/organizations are required for programs and responsibilities with mutual audiences.

Financial and material support to advance and sustain a faculty member's programmatic efforts should be sought through grants and contracts, fee-based programming, and innovative linkages with other agencies, industry, or organizational groups.

Faculty members should establish the impact of their Extension work in their promotion

dossiers by:

- Conducting program evaluations and/or applied research studies to document program impact by verifying clientele acceptance, use, or behavioral change and presenting evaluation results (i.e., customer satisfaction, outcome evaluation data) of Extension programming.
- Indicating the methodology used to obtain the information, along with the number or magnitude of clientele contacts.
- Summarizing and quantifying the focus and diversity of educational programs (e.g., number, topic, products, strategies, etc.)

### **Extension Program Delivery Quality**

Extension program delivery quality should be documented. Programming quality involves command of the subject matter discipline, progressive assimilation and delivery of new knowledge, and an ability to present information effectively and accurately. Faculty should utilize state-of-the-art communications technology when appropriate, including online delivery. Quality and effectiveness should be represented through clientele and peer evaluation. Great variability exists among Extension faculty in terms of delivery venues and methods and might include agent trainings, field days, community-based educational programs, continuing education workshops, online courses, and mass media. Extension faculty, regardless of delivery method, should document their effectiveness using a standardized evaluation tool that enables them to aggregate data from clientele over time (e.g., Overall Presenter Rating of 4.7 on a 5.0 scale, with 1 = Poor and 5 = Excellent, N = 2,500). When describing Extension delivery efforts, faculty should distinguish between external clientele and faculty/staff training.

Faculty members should establish the impact of their Extension Program Delivery Quality in their promotion dossiers by:

- Summarizing and quantifying the delivery of Extension educational programs, workshops/seminars, university level courses, guest lectures, including number of times delivered, dates, topics/titles, and methods (e.g., online vs. face-to-face).
- Describing the use of innovative teaching/educational delivery methods.
- Presenting aggregated evaluation data.
- Identifying any Extension, service or Industry awards received.

## **2. SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS**

Extension faculty are expected to engage in scholarly work in support of their Extension program. The development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative educational programs and materials (e.g., fact sheets, instruction manuals, educational videos, online courses, computer software programs, apps, etc.), which are widely accepted and used by Extension clientele, are examples of such scholarly work. Applied or translational research and comprehensive and intensive program evaluations are important components for Extension faculty. Publication of creative and scholarly work in refereed journals appropriate to the faculty member's subject matter area is highly encouraged as well as giving scholarly

presentations (including research finding) at relevant professional meetings or conferences.

Faculty members should establish the impact of their scholarly work in their promotion dossiers by:

- Describing how their scholarly work is innovative or breaks new ground.
- Demonstrating how their applied research findings and scholarly work have been adopted by industry and other stakeholders and supports their Extension program.
- Documenting invitations to deliver presentations, write review articles, and serve on grant panels and editorial boards. Repeat requests should be noted as an indicator of demand for their program.
- Documenting the number of articles published in influential trade publications and refereed journals that serve as appropriate outlets for the Extension faculty member.
- Identifying any research/scholarship awards received.

### **3. ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT MENTORING (If Applicable)**

Although Extension faculty may not hold a formal teaching appointment and teaching may not be an official job expectation, many engage in activities that fall under the Academic Instruction and Student Mentoring category. Examples include:

- Formal classroom, laboratory, or field instruction.
- Guest lectures in academic courses within Texas A&M University and any other college or university setting.
- Undergraduate student mentorship, student club activities, student competitive team activities.
- Department, AgriLife, and University internship, work study and study abroad programs.
- Graduate student mentorship, serving on graduate student committees, and serving as a chair or co-chair on graduate student committees.
- Recognition for fostering individual and team undergraduate and graduate student awards, student mentoring, development of coursework, and teaching evaluations and awards.

These activities may occur not only in a college or university setting, but also within a professional society, stakeholder student program, and government agency program.

### **4. SERVICE**

The faculty member should demonstrate evidence of service on unit/departmental, college, and agency committees. Extension faculty are also encouraged and expected to serve in various leadership roles in regional, state, national, and international professional organizations and societies, government agencies, and in stakeholder organizations (as appropriate). Establishing formal mentoring relationships with junior level Extension faculty and agreeing to serve on review panels and editorial boards are additional examples of service.

Faculty members should establish the impact of their service in their promotion dossiers by:

- Documenting service on unit/departmental, college, and agency committees (e.g., chairing a high-level search committee).
- Describing leadership roles in state, national, and international professional organizations, and societies government agencies, and in stakeholder organizations.
- Documenting service on various review panels and editorial boards for refereed journals.

### **Examples of Materials for Consideration (does not appear in order of importance)**

The following list contains examples of items that faculty members should track (if applicable) throughout their career and will be helpful when developing their Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Candidate Statements:

#### Program Development and Implementation

- Comprehensive needs assessments
- Data trend analyses
- Curriculum development
- Collaboration with internal and external partners
- Pilot testing of curriculum
- Innovative program delivery
- Program expansion

#### Program Evaluation/Applied Research

- Longitudinal impact evaluations
- Economic impact analyses
- Field trials

#### Publications

- Fact sheets
- Newsletters
- Instruction manuals
- Handbooks
- Program briefs
- Trade publications
- Refereed journal articles

#### Presentations

- Guest lectures
- Community-based presentations

- Workshops
- Seminars
- Poster presentations
- Result/method demonstrations

#### Online Products/Technologies

- Online courses, training tools, decision aids, and publications.
- Website development
- Social media engagement
- Computer software applications
- Blogs
- Podcasts
- Online Videos

#### Mass Media

- Press releases
- TV, radio, and newspaper interviews

#### Training/Technical Assistance

- Training videos
- Agent training sessions
- Leadership and volunteer training
- Consultation/technical assistance

#### Internal/External Funding

- Grants and contracts
- Program fees
- User service fees
- Financial gifts
- In-kind contributions

#### Student Mentorship

- Undergraduate student research and Extension activities.
- Service on graduate student committees: include member, co-chair, or chair, year completed (projected to be completed) and current position for students who have graduated.
- Guest lectures and other classroom help
- Student workers, internships, study abroad, and work study

In addition to items listed above, the promotion committees should consider the quality and originality of thought and the integration of educational concepts that will lead to increased awareness and appropriate behavioral change or adoption. Attention should be given to the development of techniques or new modes of educational delivery and the revision and



development of new educational approaches in the base program areas of the candidate’s discipline.

Other evidence of recognition by colleagues, clientele, and other professionals includes the following examples:

- Receipt of awards for outstanding programs or service.
- Peer recognition by other faculty within the discipline, particularly those who have direct evaluative experience, and have attended the candidate’s Extension programs or research presentations.
- Comprehensive program evaluations that attest to program effectiveness (knowledge gain, behavior change, etc.) through pre- and post-survey evaluations and/or other evidence of productive change or mastery by clientele.
- Evidence that the faculty member has been a catalyst for the initiation of new programming approaches within and/or across disciplines to include developing interactions with new faculty, scientists, and clientele.
- Contributions to professional societies such as presenting at state, national, and international meetings and holding various offices.
- Leadership in networking with other faculties, research scientists, societies, and professional groups leading to integrated interdisciplinary programming.
- Solicited and unsolicited evaluative comments by outside faculty within the discipline of national reputation as to assessment of creative professional accomplishments.

### **Standards of Achievement for Professorial Ranks**

For the rank of Assistant Professor, the items listed below should be in place at the mid-term timeframe review. For Associate Professor and Professor ranks, items listed below are what should be in place by the proposed date of promotion.

	<b>Assistant Professor</b>	<b>Associate Professor</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Degree/Experience Requirements</b>	Doctoral degree in appropriate subject matter discipline (preferred).	Minimum of 5 years at rank of assistant professor (exceptions may be granted for outstanding service and distinguished achievements).	Minimum of 5 years at rank of associate professor (exceptions may be granted for outstanding service and distinguished achievements).

<b>EXTENSION: Programmatic Development, Implementation, and Evaluation</b>			
	<b>Assistant Professor</b>	<b>Associate Professor</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Program Development and Implementation</b>	Understands the type of programmatic approaches needed to meet the varied needs and capabilities of different audiences for effective program planning and implementation.	Demonstrates evidence of effective planning and implementation of quality educational programs needed to meet the various needs and expectations of Extension clientele, including those of traditionally underserved audiences.	Demonstrates ability to plan comprehensive and impactful educational programs and develop procedures and methods that meet program outcome objectives that are consistent with unit/department goals and objectives and the agency's strategic plan.
	Assists County Extension Agents, Program Area Committee members, and volunteers in effectively using Extension's program development process.	Demonstrates ability to operate within Extension's program development process to plan, implement and evaluate Extension educational programs in the faculty member's assigned program area.	Demonstrates exemplary ability to plan, implement, and evaluate programs developed through Extension's program development process, including making necessary adjustments to educational programs based on evaluation results to maximize impacts (e.g., behavioral, economic).
	Develops recognition among peers, County Extension Agents, Regional Program Leaders, and administrators for expertise in the faculty member's subject matter area.	Recognized by peers, County Extension Agents, Regional Program Leaders, and administrators for expertise and ability to develop and plan highly effective programs.	Recognized within and outside the agency (including nationally and internationally, when applicable) for subject matter expertise, contributions to the faculty member's discipline, and exemplary Extension educational programs as evidenced

			by broad adoption and impacts.
	Conducts formal and informal needs assessments, assesses the latest trends in a faculty member's field of expertise, and develops appropriate educational responses.	Demonstrates ability to work with others (within and outside of Extension) to develop programs that address issues and problems identified through various needs assessments.	Demonstrates evidence of creativity in seeking solutions to complex educational problems and issues that advance the mission of the agency.
	Understands and demonstrates a basic level of competency in utilizing various forms of media to disseminate subject matter information.	Demonstrates evidence of consistent and effective use of various communication tools to disseminate subject matter information to Extension clientele.	Demonstrates ability to successfully utilize various forms of technology to reach clientele with programs and resources, such as social media, websites, online learning management systems, etc.
	Prepares research-based newsletters, news articles, technical fact sheets, and other educational materials.	Demonstrates ability to develop and disseminate research-based newsletters, blogs, email blasts, videos, news articles, technical fact sheets, and educational materials to Extension clientele.	Demonstrates exemplary competence in developing Extension publications (e.g., newsletter articles, news releases, technical fact sheets) and other educational resources (e.g., online courses, digital learning, social media, blogs, and podcasts).
<b>Support of Extension Activities</b>	Develops working relationships with sponsors and donors in securing and maintaining support and resources for Extension educational programs; develop grants and contracts proposals.	Demonstrates effort and success in obtaining grants and contracts to support the faculty member's educational program, including serving as Co-PI and PI on proposals.	Demonstrates evidence of significant progress in the faculty member's ability to identify, secure, and maintain support and resources for educational programs, including the successful acquisition of fee-based programming, contracts

			and grants (state and federal).
<b>Coordination and Cooperation</b>	Interacts positively with diverse populations, including teaching, research, and Extension faculty and the public, especially those participating in the faculty member's discipline.	Demonstrates ability to direct and coordinate efforts of teaching, research, and Extension faculty to create an effective and synergistic working relationship.	Demonstrates evidence of significant contributions to program unit, task forces, faculty committees, etc. and demonstrates a track record of building effective working relationships across departments, agencies, and/or colleges.
	Functions effectively with clientele, academic faculty, research scientists, and associates.	Evidence of effective cooperation with external organizations important to the Agency and educational programs.	Demonstrates cooperation with leadership of key organizations that are relevant to program delivery strategies.
<b>EXTENSION: Program Delivery Quality</b>			
	<b>Assistant Professor</b>	<b>Associate Professor</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Faculty/Staff Training and Assistance</b>	Trains Extension personnel to use appropriate educational methods and techniques for communicating with specific audiences.	Demonstrates ability to lead Extension faculty in determining and understanding the clientele's needs and interests, including the development of effective educational programs to address relevant issues.	Demonstrates evidence of providing exemplary comprehensive technical assistance and expert guidance to administrators, Extension faculty members, and county Extension agents.
<b>Teaching Effectiveness and Quality</b>	Develops effective learning environments for adult and/or youth audiences, including volunteers.	Demonstrates ability to develop and conduct formal and informal learning experiences for adult and/or youth audiences in a variety of settings and formats (face-to-face, online).	Demonstrates evidence of the development and delivery of highly effective and relevant, in-depth learning experiences in the faculty member's subject matter area, which might

			consist of community-based educational programs, formal classroom instruction, guest lectures, field trainings, continuing education workshops, webinars, online courses, etc.
	Selects suitable methods and techniques for delivering subject matter content in the faculty member's discipline.	Demonstrates effort to improve teaching methods, materials, and overall effectiveness with various Extension audiences.	Demonstrates evidence of continued efforts to improve teaching performance through the utilization of innovative delivery techniques, which are appropriate for diverse adult and/or youth audiences.
	Assesses teaching effectiveness through peer and clientele evaluations.	Demonstrates efforts to improve teaching effectiveness by responding to feedback from peer and clientele teaching evaluations.	Demonstrates evidence of continued teaching improvement by exhibiting expertise and mastery of faculty member's subject matter (as reflected in peer and clientele learning assessments and teaching evaluations).
<b>SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS</b>			
	<b>Assistant Professor</b>	<b>Associate Professor</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Scholarly Contributions and Professionalism</b>	Exhibits competency in faculty member's subject matter discipline.	Demonstrates evidence of expanded competency in faculty member's subject matter discipline.	Maintains and exhibits a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the discipline.
	Desires to improve knowledge and subject matter competence.	Demonstrates knowledge of the current advances and developments within	Demonstrates evidence of clear and distinguished contributions to the

		the profession and provides evidence of the ability to apply such knowledge.	faculty member's discipline as indicated by an established state, national, or international reputation.
	Begins building reputation with peers in the faculty member's discipline by making contributions to the profession.	Recognized locally, regionally, and at the state level by Extension peers for scholarly work and professionalism.	Recognized nationally (and in some cases, internationally) by colleagues within the discipline for distinguished scholarship and continuous record of excellence to the profession.
<b>Outcomes of Programs</b>	Develops and implements evaluation strategies to assess outcomes from Extension educational programs.	Demonstrates evidence of program impacts (i.e., knowledge gain, behavior change, adoption of new technologies and best practices, economic impact) as measured by well-designed program evaluations.	Demonstrates evidence of highly impactful Extension programs that yield results, which can be presented at state, national, and international conferences and published in refereed journals.
	Presents program outcomes at local, regional, and state meetings.	Presents program outcomes at state and national professional development conferences and professional society/organization meetings appropriate to the faculty member's discipline.	Demonstrates expanded efforts to present program outcomes at state, national, and international (when applicable) conferences and professional society/organization meetings.
	Publishes program outcomes in Extension publications (e.g., fact sheets and reports), trade publications, and refereed journals.	Demonstrates success in publishing program outcomes, including serving as lead- and co-author on refereed journal article submissions.	Show evidence of continued success at publishing research/evaluation findings in reputable refereed journals in the faculty member's discipline, including serving as lead author on publications.

**TEACHING:  
ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT MENTORING  
(If Applicable)**

	<b>Assistant Professor</b>	<b>Associate Professor</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Classroom Instruction</b>	Seeks opportunities to provide lectures and seminars in departmental courses.	Assists with the development and delivery of lectures and seminars with collaborating Teaching/Research faculty.	Provides lectures and seminars in departmental courses as they relate to Extension topics and collaborations with Teaching/Research faculty.
<b>Undergraduate and Graduate Student Mentorship</b>	Seeks opportunities to mentor undergraduate and graduate students.	Mentors undergraduate and graduate students by involving them in Extension programs and applied research.	Mentors undergraduate and graduate students, including creating Extension products by mentoring students through the process.
<b>Graduate Student Advising</b>	Seeks opportunities to serve on graduate committees.	Serves on graduate student committees or chairs/co-chairs students within subject matter discipline.	Serves on graduate student committees or chairs/co-chairs students; leads/encourages students to develop Extension materials derived from their research.

**SERVICE**

	<b>Assistant Professor</b>	<b>Associate Professor</b>	<b>Professor</b>
<b>Service on Committees</b>	Serves on unit/departmental, university, and agency committees.	Demonstrates evidence of a progression in various service roles, including assuming leadership roles on unit/departmental,	Demonstrates evidence of distinguished service on unit/departmental, university, and agency committees, including serving in clear leadership capacities

		university.	(e.g., Search Committee Chair).
	Serves on external local, regional, and statewide committees, boards, and panels.	Demonstrates evidence of a progression in various service roles external to the agency, including serving on state and national committees, boards, and panels that advance the faculty member's discipline.	Demonstrates evidence of distinguished service on state, national, and international (when appropriate) committees, boards, and panels with a clear leadership emphasis.
<b>Service in Professional Organizations</b>	Gains recognition in professional organizations (regional, state) as a contributor to the faculty member's discipline.	Recognized for service in state and national professional organizations in the faculty member's discipline (state and national level).	Serves in leadership positions in professional organizations (state, national, and international levels).



## Appendix

### GROUPS ELIGIBLE FOR PROFESSORIAL CAREER LADDER

#### Departmentalized Groups

- Agricultural Economics
- Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication
- Biological and Agricultural Engineering
- Animal Science
- Entomology
- Horticultural Sciences
- Nutrition
- Plant Pathology and Microbiology
- Poultry Science
- Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences
- Soil and Crop Sciences
- Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management

#### Non-Departmentalized Units

- 4-H Youth Development
- Agricultural and Environmental Safety
- Disaster Assessment and Recovery
- Family and Community Health
- Healthy Texas