

3.7 Academic Tenure

Academic tenure refers to the conditions and guarantees that apply to a faculty member's employment. More specifically, it refers to the protection of a faculty member against discharge from employment except for reasons of (i) incompetence, (ii) neglect of duty, or (iii) misconduct of such a nature as to indicate that the individual is unfit to continue as a member of the faculty, as specified in Code Section 603 and in accordance with the procedures provided in [section 4.10](#), or against termination of employment except as provided for in [section 4.9](#). (The overall policy for academic tenure in the UNC system is found in the UNC Code 602.)

3.7.1 The purposes intended to be served by providing the protection of academic tenure to faculty members are to secure their academic freedom and to help the institution attract and retain faculty members of high quality. While academic tenure may be withheld on any grounds other than those specifically stated to be impermissible in [section 3.7.3](#), its conferral requires the assessment that the candidate has met the criteria for the rank of associate professor as specified in [3.8.6.2](#). Promotion or appointment to the rank of professor confers permanent tenure ([3.8.6.6](#) and [3.8.7.3](#)) and requires the assessment that the candidate has met the criteria for the rank of professor ([3.8.7.2](#)).

3.7.2 The Faculty Handbook criteria for the conferral of tenure shall be the basis for each academic department's criteria for conferral of tenure, and both Faculty Handbook and departmental criteria shall be considered in all tenure decisions. Departmental criteria may be more rigorous than Faculty Handbook criteria.

The conferral of tenure requires:

- (a) an assessment of the faculty member's demonstrated professional competence;
- (b) potential for future contributions;
- (c) commitment to effective teaching, research, and public service; and
- (d) the needs and resources of the institution.

3.7.3 A decision not to grant tenure may not be based upon (1) the faculty member's exercise of rights guaranteed by either the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or Article I of the North Carolina Constitution, (2) unlawful discrimination based upon the faculty member's race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity and expression, political affiliation, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information or sexual orientation; or (3) personal malice. For purposes of this section, the term "personal malice" means dislike, animosity, ill will, or hatred based on personal characteristics, traits or circumstances of an individual that are not relevant to valid University decision making. See UNC Policy [101.3.1 II.B.](#) (4.6.1)

3.7.4 Academic tenure, as herein described, pertains exclusively to the employment of faculty members by appointment to specified faculty ranks. Appalachian State University requires the doctorate or other appropriate earned terminal degree for consideration of the conferral of permanent tenure on any faculty member, unless there are exceptional circumstances.