COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

GUIDELINES FOR THE EMPLOYMENT AND EVALUATION OF ADJUNCT FACULTY

Definition:
USM and Towson University policies define “adjunct faculty” as those faculty who are:
- Employed to provide instructional services;
- Neither tenured nor eligible for tenure;
- Appointed to teach specific courses; and
- Compensated on a course-by-course basis.

Categories of Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct Faculty I
All Adjunct Faculty, except those faculty members who meet the criteria for designation by the University as “Adjunct Faculty II.”

Adjunct Faculty II
Adjunct faculty members who have been determined by the University to have a consistent record of high-quality instruction. Towson University shall consider granting Adjunct Faculty II status to adjunct faculty members who meet the following criteria:
- The adjunct faculty member has established a record of teaching at least three years at the University for a total of at least 12 courses of three credits or more;
- The adjunct faculty member has accumulated a series of high-level performance evaluations over the course of at least twelve full semester courses (Fall or Spring) at the University; and
- The adjunct faculty member has made written application for Adjunct II status according to the guidelines below or according to guidelines for submission that may be established or altered by the University. The department chair and college dean will provide a written recommendation to the Provost on the granting of Adjunct II status.

Recruitment and Selection of Adjunct Faculty

Recruitment:
- When the need for additional adjunct hiring becomes apparent and timing permits, departments will develop announcements for adjunct positions, describing the course or courses to be taught, the beginning and end of the relevant teaching term, and the credentials and experience required. Advertising of the position may be local and regional.
- When the period available for hiring is short, departments may identify candidates through contacts with regional institutions or through other professional channels; they may contact candidates directly; and they may proceed with candidate evaluation and hiring as discussed below.

Application Materials and Process:
The applicant for adjunct employment must submit the following:
- Letter of interest/application
Official transcript of highest degree earned (a copy may be used with the initial contact; an official transcript is needed before classes begin)

Vitae/resume

Statement of applicant’s work experience relevant to teaching area (may be sufficiently covered by application letter and vitae)

Two letters of recommendations (departments may substitute phone interviews of at least two references)

Any other evidence or documents specific to the needs of a particular department degree level, or specific course, as specified by the department.

The department chair or designee will interview the candidate. Applicants should have an opportunity to pursue any questions they may have about the position, and they should be provided with access to the Towson University Policy on the Employment of Adjunct Faculty.

Normal Expectations for Credentials:

- For teaching lower-division baccalaureate-level courses, the adjunct faculty member must normally hold at least a Master’s degree in the field of study or in a closely related field identified and approved by the chair.
- For teaching upper-division baccalaureate-level courses, a doctoral degree or ABD status is normally preferred. A Master's degree may often qualify for internship courses or for courses with specific professional content related to the adjunct faculty member’s professional experience. The department chair should confer with the Dean about specific cases.
- Faculty teaching graduate courses (including 300/500 courses) must be eligible for graduate faculty status.

Teaching Assignments and Instructional Support

Departments should provide adjunct faculty members with the following information and support. (For courses with a large number of adjunct faculty teaching them, a full time faculty member or members should be assigned oversight and mentoring responsibilities.)

- Course requirements, goals, and learning outcomes for courses to be taught; sample syllabi or a standard syllabus for the course when such exists.
- Guidance on the selection of textbooks and establishing class resources (for example, Blackboard)
- Expectations for faculty, including meeting all classes for the full scheduled time, reporting any absences due to illness prior to the class periods affected, communicating with the chair and with other faculty and staff, procedures for handling student issues, holding office hours, assessing student performance, grading and grade reporting, and reviewing and using student evaluation feedback.
- Types of academic resources available to students who need assistance (Disability Support Services, The Writing Center, Counseling and Health Services, etc.).
- Access to
  - information on the college and department’s policies
  - official schedule of classes, including academic calendar and final exam matrix,
  - University email account
Information on administrative support including telephone or other voice access, necessary office supplies, copying services for course materials, and appropriate space for meeting with students during designated office hour time.

- Adjunct faculty should successfully complete (and provide documentation of completing) the online sexual harassment training before beginning classroom instruction.

**Evaluation**

**Standard Procedures for Evaluation**

- Peer evaluations:
  - New adjunct faculty will have a peer evaluation in the first and in the second semester of teaching at TU. Departments shall establish the format for written feedback from peer evaluations.
  - Adjunct I faculty who have taught more than two semesters at TU will have a minimum of one peer evaluation annually.
  - Adjunct II faculty members may have peer evaluations once for every two years of teaching.
  - Written comments from the peer evaluation will be provided to the adjunct faculty member within two weeks of the classroom visit. The adjunct faculty member will have an opportunity to write comments in response, if he or she chooses to do so.

- Student evaluations will be conducted according to department procedures and included in the evaluation process.
- Formal and informal feedback from faculty mentor(s) or other department contact persons will be included in the evaluation.
- When adjunct faculty teach an online course, the chair will designate at least one faculty member with online course experience to assist in evaluating the course and its evaluation results. If a departmental faculty member with appropriate experience is unavailable, the chair may seek assistance from CIAT.
- The chair or designee will review both formal and informal feedback regarding the adjunct faculty member and discuss performance results with the adjunct faculty member after the first year of teaching. Subsequently, the chair or designee will discuss performance results with the adjunct faculty member (1) when there is evidence that improvement in some aspect of the adjunct faculty member’s performance is needed or (2) periodically as determined by the department.
- The chair may also require an appointment with the adjunct faculty member at any point that issues of performance emerge.
- Departments may provide additional definition of the processes or standards associated with advancement to Adjunct II so long as they do not violate the provisions of the USM and Towson University policies on adjunct faculty. Departmental statements must be put in writing and approved by the Dean of the College before they may be applied in the evaluation of faculty for Adjunct II status.

**Opportunities for Teaching Development**

The college and its departments will encourage interested adjunct faculty to take part in professional development opportunities at TU. Adjunct faculty shall be informed of and invited to college development opportunities available to full-time faculty, as well as have access to university-wide faculty learning opportunities that can enhance teaching and classroom management skills.

**Application for Adjunct II Status:**
Procedures for applying for Adjunct Faculty II status are as follows. Due dates or documentation requirements will follow University policy; hence, any adjustment in that policy takes precedence over this document.

- An Adjunct I faculty member who meets the requirements listed under Adjunct Faculty II above must submit a written request for consideration for promotion to Adjunct II to the department chairperson no later than the 1st Friday in March. This letter must be accompanied by a dossier to contain these items in this order:

  1. Section I: Curriculum vitae
  2. Section II: The letter requesting consideration for promotion to Adjunct II
  3. Section III: Student evaluations that cover at least three years of teaching at Towson University and 36 contact hours. This section should also include a summary table of overall teaching evaluation mean and median, at least two peer evaluations, course syllabi (one for each different course taught), a narrative statement about individual teaching philosophy, an interpretation of the student course evaluations for all courses, and a response to peer and chairperson evaluations.
  4. Section IV: Heading for recommendations from the department chairperson and the dean of the college to be added.

- At the department level, the dossier should be reviewed by at least three faculty members who will advise the chair on the quality and level of expectation established by the adjunct faculty member in the courses taught.
- The dossier must be received from the department with the chair’s letter added by the 3rd Friday in April.
- The dossier must be received by the Office of the Provost no later than the 1st Friday in May.
- By the 1st Friday in June, the Provost’s letter of decision is conveyed to the faculty member, department, and college dean.
- All promotions to Adjunct Faculty II will be effective on the beginning of the following fall semester and any courses taught by new Adjunct Faculty II will be compensated at the new salary rate (10% above the base for Adjunct Faculty I).

Adjunct Faculty Consultation:

At least twice each academic year (normally once each semester), adjunct faculty will be invited to meet with college administration to share perspectives and to consult on matters affecting adjuncts. Each department will name at least one adjunct faculty member, when feasible, to meet with adjunct colleagues and with the Dean or Associate Dean. The meeting will be open to all adjunct faculty who may wish to attend.