A. General Criteria

The appointment and promotion of Academic Professionals at The University of Georgia are based upon the experience and academic background of the candidate as well as the program service needs in the position. The designation applies to a variety of academic assignments that call for academic background similar to that of a faculty member with professorial rank but which are distinctly different from professorial positions. Examples include managing instructional laboratories, assuming academic program administrative roles not suited for the expectations of tenure-track faculty, operating instructional technology support programs, being responsible for general academic advising, assuming professional student counseling center responsibilities, providing specialized skill acquisition training as support for academic programs, and working with tenure-track faculty in course and curriculum development.

The academic background and experience of candidates must be relevant to position responsibilities. As a counterpart to Public Service Professionals and Research Professionals the positions call for graduate education and training but have responsibilities which preclude meeting criteria for progression through tenure-track faculty ranks. They support, maintain and enhance academic programs and program management. General categories include:

1. Training and Instructional Support. This includes educational needs assessment, program development and coordination, instructional materials and technology development, delivery of specialized or skill acquisition instruction, and program evaluation.
2. Technical Assistance. An advisory or operating role which provides specialized knowledge appropriate for program support and development. The activities range from a significant or advisory or operating role to managing a technical support unit to development of organizational structures and function.
3. Specialized Management. This includes supervision of clinical practical or field experience, or providing services or out-of-class educational opportunities for students.

All provisions of Section 8.3.8.3 of the Board of Regents' Policy Manual apply to the employment of Academic Professionals including:

1. The positions require an appropriate terminal degree, or in rare and extraordinary circumstances, qualification on the basis of demonstrably successful related experience, which exception is expressly approved by the President.
2. The Academic Professional designation may not be assigned to a position where the teaching and research responsibilities total 50% or more of the total assignment.
3. The position is not a tenure-track position, and the holder is not eligible for consideration for the award of tenure, or for probationary credit toward tenure.
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B. Academic Professional Ranks

Academic Professional Associate

This is an entry-level rank which normally requires completion of the terminal degree in a disciplinary area related to position responsibilities.

Academic Professional

Appointment to this rank ordinarily requires completion of the appropriate terminal academic degree. It also requires significant related experience or promotion from the rank of Academic Professional Associate. Ordinarily at least five years as an Academic Professional Associate would be required before promotion to the rank of Academic Professional. The quality of performance and potential for development must be recognized by peers.

Senior Academic Professional

Appointment to this rank ordinarily requires the appropriate related terminal degree. It also requires evidence of superior performance in the chosen field, recognition by peers, and successful related experience. Promotion to Senior Academic Professional from the rank of Academic Professional requires at least four years at that level, evidence of superior performance and recognition by peers (whether national, regional, or local as appropriate for the position).

C. Appointment of Academic Professionals

As with all faculty appointments, Academic Professional ranks must receive prior budgetary approval of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost prior to the initiation of a search or the identification of an individual for the position.

Recommendations for the appointment of Academic Professionals originate within program units. The unit executive officer is responsible for designating a search committee and, with the search committee chair, for preparation and dissemination of position announcements in compliance with Affirmative Action guidelines and University policies and procedures. Appointments to an Academic Professional position are recommended by the unit executive officer and approved through the typical academic administrative process (e.g., department head or director, dean or appropriate vice president, Provost and President.

No appointment is final until it has been approved by the President.

B. Reappointment

Reappointments of Academic Professionals are made yearly. Notice of reappointment and non-reappointment must be made in a timely manner consistent with Board of Regents and University of Georgia policy.
C. Promotion of Academic Professionals

After initial appointment, each candidate for promotion will be judged primarily on the basis of the quality of performance of her/his assigned responsibilities consistent with the appropriate position description and on whether or not she/he meets the criteria for the rank. The candidate will also be expected to have made significant progress in her/his own professional area. Documentation of this progress necessarily will be appropriate for the specific position and may include such items as professional recognition, awards, service in professional associations, and service within the academic community and professional or disciplinary contributions.

Academic Professional ranks constitute a career ladder, and minimum times in rank are generally required for consideration for promotion. However, promotion is not routine: Each rank has its own performance criteria. Thus, successful performance at one rank in and of itself does not necessarily imply having met the criteria for the next rank simply with the passage of time.

Promotion recommendations originate in the unit in which the individual holds her/his appointment. The typical process will be from department head (or director) to dean or appropriate vice president and then the Provost and President for final approval.

To implement the promotion process the appropriate executive officer will convene a faculty committee of tenured faculty and/or academic professionals at or above the rank being considered. At minimum, the committee will review the promotion dossier (outlined below) and conduct a vote for promotion. Based on the results of a written ballot, the committee will send its recommendation to the executive officer describing the rationale of the vote either for or against promotion. If both the committee and the unit executive officer are against the promotion, then the dossier need not be forwarded. Where there is a disagreement between the committee and the unit executive officer, the dossier will be forwarded to the next level with a full explanation of the difference.

Preparation of the promotion dossier is the responsibility of the unit executive officer and should include the following information:

- A cover letter which describes what the candidate has accomplished and what there is about the quality of the candidate's work and expertise which warrants promotion. If the promotion also includes a change in, or an addition to, professional responsibilities, the change should be described. If a candidate’s dean or direct supervisor (as appropriate for the position) does not support promotion, the candidate may designate a tenured faculty member or full-time senior non-tenure track faculty member within the unit to prepare the letter. In this case, the dean or direct supervisor may also add a cover letter to the dossier with his/her rationale for not supporting promotion.
- A position description. If the promotion includes a change in professional responsibilities, the proposed position description should be included.
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- A vita which summarizes biographical, personal, and professional data. Because Academic Professional positions are so varied in responsibilities, no single vita format can be appropriate. However, the initial page should include the standard education and work history. Professional contributions beyond those of the position description should be included, as should any awards, recognition, grants, etc.

- Letters of recommendation. Depending upon the nature of the candidate's responsibilities, these letters may be national, regional, or local. There should be at least three and need not be more than five, but each should address the substance of the candidate's accomplishments and be solicited either by the unit executive officer or the committee chair.

If the recommended promotion is within a college or school, the dean, upon receipt of a promotion recommendation, may at her/his discretion form an advisory committee for review of the dossier. The dossier is forwarded with the dean's recommendation to the Provost. If the dean makes a recommendation contrary to that coming from the unit, she/he will provide a cover letter with a rationale. If the recommended promotion is not within a college or school, it will go through the appropriate vice president and then to the Provost.

The Provost will review the dossier (and may employ an appointed advisory committee in the process) and if approves the promotion, forwards it to the President for final approval.

D. Appeal Process

The candidate may appeal a negative decision at the unit level. The appeal must be based on the perception of significant omissions or commissions in the review process, impermissible bias in the review, or procedural errors of sufficient moment to have precluded an objective, fair review. The appeal must be made to the next level of review and the appropriate executive officer (e.g., dean or vice president) may convene a committee to review the appeal and make a recommendation. The process of appeals may continue until a final decision by the President.

Questions: Contact UGA Office of Faculty Affairs

Source: UGA Academic Affairs Policy Manual, 1.02-6
Board of Regents Policy Manual, 8.3.8.3