

## **Standard Practices for Performance Review of Contingent Faculty**

The School of Arts and Sciences (A&S) at the University of Richmond will implement standard practices for the performance review of contingent faculty, i.e. adjuncts (part-time) and term hires (full-time for an academic year or a semester). The primary purpose of the review is to provide formative feedback on teaching, though instructors may use the review to demonstrate teaching effectiveness and evaluators may use the review as a resource for recommending instructors for reappointment or for a professional reference.

Background and Rationale: The most recent accreditation review by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) included a request for information about how department chairs and interdisciplinary program coordinators review the performance of contingent faculty (adjuncts and term hires). A January 2018 sample survey of a few departments revealed a mixture of practices or approaches, and no formal standard practice for reviewing contingent faculty across departments and programs.

The School of Arts and Sciences conducted a study of contingent faculty from 2010 to 2014, culminating in a Contingent Faculty Reform Initiative (CFRI). The objectives of the CFRI were “promoting the teacher-scholar model of faculty appointment;” “reducing the reliance on contingent faculty;” encouraging “more efficient use of faculty teaching capacity;” and “improving treatment and compensation of contingent faculty.”

Although the CFRI has produced some positive results, it did not include practices for overseeing or reviewing the courses taught by or the teaching effectiveness of contingent faculty. While we should not assume that contingent faculty are not performing well, there are several reasons for prescribing and implementing standard practices of evaluation.

- (1) Students deserve well-designed and challenging courses taught by knowledgeable and engaged instructors. Even as we strive to rely less upon contingent faculty, students should expect the highest quality instruction from them.
- (2) Contingent faculty benefit from the feedback they receive from supervisors in the planning, execution, and evaluation of courses. Contingent faculty want their students to learn; many use their experience as a springboard to a position at another University; and some return to Richmond to teach additional courses. Constructive input from a supervisor can better align their teaching with department and University expectations, and evidence of well-designed courses and teaching effectiveness improve the chances of re-appointment or advancement. Indeed, many chairs serve as references or write letters of recommendation for contingent faculty, and the chair’s review could serve as a basis for a reference.
- (3) A standard set of evaluative practices for contingent faculty is a sign of effective administration and personnel management. Those practices can be employed consistently during the course of a chair’s term and provide new chairs with reliable guidelines.

Definition of Contingent Faculty in the [Faculty Handbook](#): Temporary and Restricted Term Faculty

*“Temporary and Restricted Term faculty members are those persons whose primary responsibilities are teaching and/or research and who have been appointed, either on a fulltime or part-time basis, for one semester or up to three academic years. These appointments are not renewable except by subsequent and separate appointment letter. Visiting and adjunct faculty appointments fall in this category. Faculty with Temporary and Restricted Term Appointments are not eligible for tenure.”*

Visiting faculty (Term Faculty) are full-time one semester or academic year appointments. Adjunct faculty are part-time faculty on one semester appointments.

Hiring, Supervision, and Evaluation of Contingent Faculty (Term and Adjunct Faculty)

- (1) During the hiring phase, the department chair or interdisciplinary program coordinator (if hiring for prefix courses related to an interdisciplinary program)<sup>1</sup> should ask prospective faculty about their teaching methodology and request course syllabi if available. Before offering a position, the chair/interdisciplinary program coordinator should describe typical course expectations, pedagogical methods, and the types of students the instructor will be teaching. The review process should also be explained.
- (2) The chair/interdisciplinary program coordinator should offer to share sample syllabi from the course the instructor will be teaching and, if at all possible, should review the instructor’s syllabus (or syllabi) before the semester begins and offer prudent guidance.
- (3) The chair/interdisciplinary program coordinator should “check in” during the first four to six weeks of the semester to inquire about the instructor’s experience and offer assistance as needed.
- (4) Within one month after the instructor’s first semester of teaching (either the fall semester or the academic year), the chair/interdisciplinary program coordinator, or designee, should review available materials related to teaching (e.g. syllabi, assignments, and Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) results), complete the [Contingent Faculty Review form](#), The chair/interdisciplinary program coordinator or designee should share the content of the evaluation form with the instructor.
- (5) Chairs/interdisciplinary program coordinators should complete the review form within one month of the semester or academic year annually for the duration of the faculty member’s appointment.

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<sup>1</sup> The department chair or interdisciplinary program coordinator may appoint a designee with specialization in the subject matter to collaborate on the tasks outlined in this section.