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Miami University, Oxford Ohio

Joint Faculty Appointment Guidelines

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Introduction

A joint faculty appointment is defined as one in which a tenure-eligible or tenured faculty member has a compensated FTE appointment in two or more departments or programs. (Note: Joint appointments do not apply to faculty whose workload may spread across two or more departments or programs but whose salary is compensated by one unit. In this latter situation, the faculty member should seek affiliation with the secondary program or department. See [faculty affiliate guidelines](#) for more information.)

Joint tenured and tenure-eligible faculty appointments in more than one department or program can advance interdisciplinary and disciplinary research and education and can assist faculty in moving across administrative boundaries to undertake innovative intellectual and artistic endeavors and to produce pioneering knowledge. A faculty member with appointments in more than one department or program can promote collaborations between the academic units, thus contributing to the cultural diversity of both units.

This document sets guidelines and principles to assist the Office of the Provost and the academic divisions in recruiting, appointing, reviewing, promoting, and evaluating tenure-eligible and tenured faculty members who hold a joint academic appointment. The purpose of these guidelines is to help jointly appointed tenure-eligible and tenured faculty to thrive at Miami University.

Joint academic appointments are held by tenure-eligible and tenured faculty and commonly split 75%-25% between units. Appointments may occur between departments or programs within one division or between departments or programs from different divisions.

Principles

When a joint academic appointment is created, an MOU between the two units should be written and signed; signatories should include the faculty member, the heads of the units involved as well as the appropriate dean(s) and Provost. The MOU will articulate the procedures for evaluation and assignment of teaching, advising, and service responsibilities. It may also address other issues such as “start-up packages” and space. The goal should be that the faculty member’s obligations across the two units are not greater than those of others who are full-time in one unit.

Units should agree on a single, joint process for review and evaluation, especially at times of the third-year review, tenure, and promotion. A single, joint process ensures that both units have input on the review and reduces the risk of conflicting feedback from the two units.

An academic department should serve as the administrative home. [Faculty who currently hold joint or single academic appointments with their administrative home in an academic program may continue in this arrangement.] The administrative home department should be articulated in the MOU. The administrative home department should take the lead on the academic review and evaluation. Each unit should take steps to help the faculty member with the joint academic appointment become part of the community such as ensuring the faculty member’s participation in meetings and events and inclusion on regular written and electronic communications.

Units should work together to ensure that faculty members with the joint academic appointments are not excessively burdened and, in total, have comparable access to resources as faculty with single academic appointments. These resources include mentors, space, equipment, and funding.

The academic review of the faculty member should acknowledge the faculty member’s multiple academic commitments and (if applicable) interdisciplinary work. In the case of faculty engaging in interdisciplinary scholarship, the review may entail making special effort to evaluate the work that falls outside of the normal purview of a single discipline. In this situation, reviewers for tenure and promotion should be selected carefully with the goal of identifying scholars who are capable of looking beyond disciplinary confines.

If the faculty member becomes aware of conflicting procedures regarding his or her joint academic appointment, he or she must bring these to the unit heads’ attention in a timely manner. The unit heads will then work together to resolve the conflict and make note of the resolution in the MOU via an addendum. The appropriate dean(s) will address conflicts that cannot be resolved by the unit heads, and the Provost will address and resolve conflicts that cannot be resolved by the academic dean(s).

Practices

A faculty member with a joint academic appointment may be established when a dean, department chair or program director decides to conduct a search for a faculty member. When the initiation of the appointment comes from a department or program, the chair or director will seek approval from the appropriate academic dean. If the position calls for expertise that extends beyond one department or division, the dean may decide to search for a faculty member with a

joint academic appointment. The academic dean and chair will confer with the appropriate department chair, program director, and academic dean (if the program or department is housed outside of the division) on the possibility of searching for a faculty member with a joint appointment.

If the search is approved by the appropriate dean(s) in consultation with the Provost, the dean(s) who will control the salary line of the faculty member has the authority to establish the search committee and the administrative departmental home for the faculty member who will be hired. A search committee that includes representatives from the departments or programs that will “host” the faculty with a joint academic appointment is strongly encouraged.

If the salary will be split between two divisions, the two deans will collaborate to establish the search committee and administrative home. Under Responsibility Centered Management (RCM), division deans will develop an accounting mechanism for splitting the net teaching revenue for courses taught by faculty with joint academic appointments across divisions. The revenue sharing will be based on the percentage of salary contributions by each division.

Once the faculty member has been selected, the unit heads and the appropriate dean(s) should create a plan for the joint academic appointment at the time of the appointment. The plan should be outlined in a formal, written memorandum of understanding.

The MOU should include:

- Designation of an administrative home department that ensures that reviews and other administrative tasks are completed in a timely fashion. The administrative home department takes responsibility for notifying the other unit of reviews, preparing and modifying the MOU, and providing opportunities for review and renegotiation of agreements and plans. This designation does not release the other unit from its responsibility for providing clear communication with the faculty member and being responsive to issues as they arise. The dean(s) of the division(s) should advise in the event of disagreements on this and other issues. Conflicts that cannot be resolved by the appropriate dean(s) will be resolved by the Provost. Ideally, the heads of the two units will coordinate at least once annually to discuss the coordination of the joint academic appointment.
- Appointment percentage in each unit which is typically 75% - 25%.
- Teaching, advising, and service expectations: The procedures for setting annual teaching, advising, and service expectations should be clearly delineated. The overall demands of the faculty member with the joint academic appointment should be reasonable and appropriately balanced in terms of the fractional appointments. Teaching expectations should describe the general teaching load per academic year, rather than specific courses to be taught.
- Evaluation criteria and procedure: To the extent possible, the units participating in the appointment should define the standards and criteria that will be used to assess the quality of the faculty member’s scholarship or creative activity, teaching, advisement, and service. When appropriate, these standards should take into account the unique features of interdisciplinary activity and the differences among the units where the faculty holds

appointments. A clear indication of the procedure that will be used to determine the merit increment should be made.

- Access to resources: Unit heads should discuss and agree on the faculty member's access to resources in each unit [e.g., office space, administrative support, funding (such as travel money), and mentoring]. The units in which the faculty member holds the joint academic appointment should provide funds to the faculty member in accord with each unit's and its divisional practices and that are proportional to the faculty member's percentage of appointment.
- Mentoring: If the joint academic appointment is for a tenure-eligible faculty member, each unit is encouraged to identify a mentor for the faculty member who can offer insights into the tenure and promotion process and who ideally is familiar with aspects of the faculty member's scholarly, service, and teaching interests. At least once a year, the joint mentors are encouraged to discuss the progress of the jointly appointed faculty member and meet together with the faculty member to offer feedback and advice.
- Timing and conduct of reviews: At the time of the appointment and in consultation with the faculty member, the unit heads and dean(s) should produce a written plan for conducting reviews (annual and promotional). The plan should be streamlined as much as possible and include information about timing. The units should agree upon how they will communicate effectively throughout the review process to ensure that input is offered from both units in the review and evaluation of the faculty member. At minimum, the chair or director of the faculty member's secondary program or department should submit a written letter to the chair of the faculty member's administrative home department which is included in the review process.
- Review committee: If possible, the unit heads should commit to creating an ad hoc bilateral review committee whose composition is roughly proportional to the faculty member's percentage of appointment. The general composition (e.g., number of members from each unit and their rank) should be articulated in the MOU, rather than specific names of committee members. When evaluating a faculty member who engages in interdisciplinary scholarship, members of the review committee should, when possible, understand the values and norms of interdisciplinary scholarship as well as the norms of the participating disciplines and should resolve any differences in emphasis between the two units. It may be helpful to write down the metrics for judging academic success. Special care should be given to selecting outside reviewers for promotion and tenure carefully, with the goal of selecting scholars who are capable of looking beyond disciplinary boundaries.