

# Chapter Two - Academic Appointments

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## Chapter Two - Academic Appointments

### 1. Categories, Roles, and Titles of Faculty Members at WPI

Consistent with WPI's purpose to create, discover, and convey knowledge at the frontiers of academic inquiry, the University is committed to maintaining an appropriate balance of faculty members in the following broad categories: those who balance both research and teaching; those who primarily serve the educational mission as teachers; and those devoted entirely to research. WPI meets this commitment by maintaining a Faculty with an appropriate range of roles, responsibilities, tenure status, and titles.

#### a. The Roles and Titles of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Members

All tenured and tenure-track faculty members at WPI work toward and are awarded tenure consistent with criteria appropriate to either their dual mission or teaching mission. As a body, the tenured and tenure-track dual mission Faculty plays a primary role in fulfilling the University's educational mission, and plays the primary role in fulfilling the University's research and scholarly mission. The tenured and tenure-track teaching mission Faculty plays a primary role in fulfilling the University's educational mission and contributes to the University's scholarly mission. Regardless of their dual or teaching missions, all tenured and tenure-track faculty members contribute in significant ways to shaping and delivering WPI's academic programs.

*Ranks and Titles:*

*Assistant, Associate and (full) Professor:* These ranks and titles are for dual-mission tenured and tenure-track faculty members.

*Assistant, Associate and (full) Professor of Teaching:* These ranks and titles are for teaching-mission tenured and tenure-track faculty members.

#### b. Categories, Roles, and Titles of Nontenure-Track Faculty Members

### ***i. Secured Nontenure-Track Teaching Faculty Members***

Secured nontenure-track teaching faculty members are full-time employees of the University who are hired with the expectation that they will have continuing academic responsibilities at WPI focused on their teaching, and with provisions for a long-term institutional commitment from WPI. They may also make a range of additional contributions through their scholarship and through their service to the University. They are an integral part of the fabric of the campus, and contribute in significant ways to shaping and delivering WPI's academic programs.

#### *Ranks and Titles:*

*Instructor; Senior Instructor; or Assistant, Associate, and (full) Teaching Professor:* The ranks and titles of Assistant, Associate, and (full) Teaching Professor will be awarded only to those individuals with both a Ph.D. degree (or the recognized highest degree for the discipline) and with teaching credentials appropriate to the corresponding tenured or tenure-track rank.

*Professor of Practice:* These are full-time non-tenure track faculty members who, by virtue of their non-academic industry-related experiences, are hired to bring a unique, current area of expertise to teaching. This experience and expertise must be distinct from that which would be brought by a conventional tenured or tenure-track faculty member and should be aligned with a specific institutional need or required area of expertise.

### ***ii. Short-term Nontenure-Track Teaching Faculty Members***

Short-term nontenure-track teaching faculty members are full-time employees of the University who are hired with the expectation that their employment at WPI will be temporary and with academic responsibilities focused on filling a short-term institutional teaching need (e.g.: to cover a sabbatical or leave of absence, to fill a temporary gap created by an unanticipated retirement or by a sudden unexpected increase in enrollment).

#### *Ranks and Titles:*

*Instructor; Senior Instructor; or Assistant, Associate, and (full) Teaching Professor:* The ranks and titles of Assistant, Associate, and (full) Teaching Professor will be awarded only to those individuals with both a Ph.D. degree (or the recognized highest degree for the discipline) and with teaching credentials appropriate to the corresponding tenured or tenure-track rank.

### **iii. *Nontenure-Track Research Faculty Members***

Nontenure-track research faculty members are full-time employees of the University who are hired, usually on research grants, with the expectation that their academic responsibilities at WPI are focused on their research. The length of full-time relationship between WPI and the faculty member will depend on the nature and duration of the research funding arrangement.

*Ranks and Titles:*

*Assistant, Associate, and (full) Research Professor:* The ranks and titles Assistant, Associate, and (full) Research Professor will be awarded only to those individuals with both a Ph.D. degree (or the recognized highest degree for the discipline) and with research credentials appropriate to the corresponding tenured or tenure-track rank.

### **iv. *Adjunct Nontenure-Track Faculty Members***

Adjunct nontenure-track faculty members are part-time employees of the University who play specific roles. Some adjunct faculty members develop long-term relationships with WPI and take on significant responsibilities. Other adjunct faculty members may be hired for a specific limited period of time with no expectations that they will take on significant ongoing responsibilities.

### **v. *Others with Teaching and Research Responsibilities at WPI***

*Visiting Faculty Members:* Visiting faculty members are Assistant, Associate, or (full) Professors who are visiting from some other institution, for periods up to one full year. Appointment as a Visiting faculty member would not be made for other full-time non-tenure track appointments.

*Post-Doctoral Scholars:* Postdoctoral scholars are individuals who have received a doctoral degree (or equivalent) and are engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path.

## **2. Balance of the Faculty At WPI: Faculty Populations**

Consistent with WPI's purpose to create, discover, and convey knowledge at the frontiers of academic inquiry, the University is committed to maintaining an appropriate balance of faculty members who combine both research and teaching, and

faculty members who primarily serve the educational mission as teachers and experts in pedagogy, course design, and course delivery.

WPI meets this commitment by aiming to balance its Faculty as follows: 70 percent tenured and tenure-track (TTT) dual mission teaching-research faculty members and 30 percent teaching mission faculty members. The TTT dual-mission teaching-research faculty members consist of Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors. The teaching-mission faculty members consist of the following: tenured and tenure-track (TTT) Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors of Teaching; and non-tenure track (NTT) Assistant Teaching Professors, Associate Teaching Professors, Full Teaching Professors, Professors of Practice, Instructors, and Senior Instructors.

WPI's initial three-year goal is to balance its teaching mission faculty members (by fall 2023) as follows: 40 percent tenured or tenure-track and 60 percent non-tenure-track, with an openness to further increasing the fraction of tenured or tenure-track teaching mission faculty members in the years that immediately follow.

The University should periodically revisit these commitments and goals through campus-wide discussions that either affirm their soundness or develop an understanding and a consensus concerning changes in mission, priorities, resources, or strategy that would require them to change. While the goals are described quantitatively to provide clarity, there is flexibility in the understanding that they are not exact and can be reconsidered when necessary.

Early each fall, the Provost will provide a report to the Committee on Governance detailing the numbers of faculty members in each category (described in Section 1) across the institution and within each department, division, and school. In collaboration with the Provost, the Committee on Governance will disseminate a final report to the Faculty and present the results for open discussion at a faculty meeting during the same year.

### **3. Policies on Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Appointments**

WPI employs faculty members of the highest quality in teaching and in either scholarship or continuing professional growth and currency, as appropriate to the expectations associated with their faculty positions. Every effort is made to recruit and attract outstanding candidates and to encourage and enable them, once hired, to demonstrate teaching effectiveness, active scholarship, and/or continuing professional growth and currency in their own fields of interest.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty members are the President, the Provost, and those individuals holding full-time appointments with the following exact ranks and titles: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Professor of Teaching, Associate

Professor of Teaching, and Assistant Professor of Teaching.

All appointments of these faculty members shall be either (a) probationary with respect to tenure, or (b) with tenure.

## **a. Probationary Appointments and Periods, Initial Appointments, Reappointments, Reviews, Non-Reappointments, Terminal Appointments, and Resignations of Tenure-Track Faculty Members**

### **i. Probationary Appointments of Tenure-Track Faculty Members**

Probationary appointments may be for one year or for other stated periods, subject to renewal, and may include credit on the tenure clock for previous full-time service at the assistant rank or higher at WPI or at other academic institutions. A tenure-track faculty member's tenure clock begins running on the July 1 closest to the starting date of the initial probationary appointment. (For more detail on the tenure clock, see Chapter Three: Tenure, Section 2.)

The minimum and maximum durations of probationary appointments prior to tenure reviews are set as follows:

- The minimum time served on a probationary appointment at the assistant rank in either the dual-mission or teaching-mission tenure track prior to the tenure review is three years because assistant professors receive a combined tenure and promotion review (see Chapter Three: Tenure, Section 1) and must have completed at least three years in the same track prior to review for promotion to the associate rank (see Chapter Four: Promotions, Section 1.a.i).
- The minimum time served on a probationary appointment at the associate or full rank in either the dual-mission or teaching-mission tenure track prior to tenure review is two years because no probationary faculty member may serve less than two years on the tenure clock prior to tenure review.
- The maximum time served on a probationary appointment for all faculty members is limited by the requirement that the mandatory tenure review must be conducted in the academic year immediately after five years have been accumulated on the tenure clock. The probationary appointment continues for one additional year during the academic year of the mandatory tenure review. (For more detail on the mandatory tenure review, see Chapter Three: Tenure, Section 1.)

The **probationary period** of a tenure-track faculty member refers to the *total* time served at WPI *as a tenure-track faculty member* regardless of whether the tenure clock is running or is stopped, including time served during the academic year of the tenure review. (For more detail on the tenure clock, see Chapter Three; Tenure,



Section 2.)

### **Initial Probationary Appointments of Tenure-Track Faculty Members**

An initial appointment of a probationary faculty member on the tenure track is reviewed by the Department Head, the Dean of the appropriate school, and the Provost. In the case of an appointment above the assistant rank in any tenure-track, the appointment is also reviewed by the Committee on Appointments and Promotion to see that the candidate's qualifications are commensurate with the criterion used for promotion to the stated rank in the appropriate track.

Once the Provost has approved the appointment, they forward an official offer letter of initial tenure-track appointment to the candidate. The precise terms and conditions of every such faculty appointment must be stated in writing in the letter and are in the possession of both WPI and the prospective faculty member before the appointment is consummated. These terms and conditions must include a clear designation that the appointment is probationary with respect to tenure, the rank and title of the appointment, the number of years credited on the tenure clock and the corresponding academic year of the scheduled mandatory tenure review accounting for all time credited on the tenure clock, and - if the appointment is at the associate rank - a clear statement that the faculty member should first achieve tenure before seeking promotion to full rank in their particular track (see Chapter Four: Promotions, Section 1.a.ii).

For consistency with the minimum duration of probationary periods permitted prior to tenure review described above, probationary faculty members at the assistant rank in either tenure track may be given no more than two years of credit on the tenure clock at the time of the initial probationary appointment, and probationary faculty members at the associate or full rank in either tenure track may be given no more than three years of credit on the tenure clock at the time of the initial probationary appointment.

Faculty members switching from the Teaching Professor track to the Professor of Teaching track, take on the same rank in their new track.

### **Reappointments of Tenure-Track Faculty Members**

Recommendations to the Provost for reappointment of probationary faculty members will originate with the Department Head (or equivalent) after consultation with the other members of the Department Tenure Committee. Subsequently, the Provost consults with the appropriate Dean.

Reappointment letters are for the period commencing July 1. WPI will make every effort to notify faculty members of the terms and conditions of their renewals by March 15. Reappointment letters should explicitly state the academic year of the

scheduled mandatory tenure review accounting for all stoppages of the tenure clock granted up to that point in time.

Within the first year of service a reappointment letter with terms and conditions will be forwarded to the probationary faculty member by no later than April 15th. For individuals whose initial appointment year is two terms or less, the next full year (July 1 to June 30) will constitute the first year of service for a) reappointment dates, and b) for time on the tenure clock counted toward the mandatory tenure review. (For more detail on the mandatory tenure review, see Chapter Three: Tenure, Section 1.)

If the probationary appointment is to be renewed beyond the first academic year of service, then a reappointment letter with terms and conditions will be forwarded to the probationary faculty member by no later than April 15th before the new academic year.

## **ii. Annual Review of Tenure-Track Faculty Members**

To assist probationary faculty members in enhancing their teaching effectiveness, developing their scholarly competence, and maintaining their professional growth and currency, each Department Tenure Committee (DTC) will conduct an annual review of each probationary faculty member consistent with the set of tenure criteria (see Chapter Three: Tenure, Section 3) appropriate to the expectations associated with their faculty position at WPI.

The faculty member being reviewed will provide the DTC with documentation of their efforts in each category up to that date as well as future plans. The DTC may determine the format of this document (e.g. Faculty Annual Report, tenure dossier format or other). Following the DTC's review of the documentation provided, the DTC members will meet and discuss the teaching, scholarship, professional growth and currency, and service aspects of the candidate's efforts up to that date as well as future plans as appropriate to the faculty member's academic track, and together formulate recommendations to the candidate.

The members of the DTC will then meet with the candidate to review these recommendations and address any concerns or questions by either party. A summary of the DTC review and recommendations will be prepared, signed by the members of the DTC and the candidate to acknowledge receipt, and kept on file in the department.

CTAF will be officially notified that the report has been completed and signed no later than May 1st. These documents will remain confidential and will NOT be included in the official tenure dossier unless the candidate so chooses. They must remain on file in the department for a minimum of one year after a tenure decision has been made or the candidate withdraws from the tenure process.

### **iii. Non-Reappointments, Terminal Appointments, and Resignations of Tenure-Track Faculty Members**

#### **Non-Reappointments**

Recommendations to the Provost for non-reappointment of probationary faculty members will originate with the Department Head (or equivalent) after consultation with the other members of the Department Tenure Committee (or equivalent). Subsequently, the Provost consults with the appropriate Dean. The Provost shall meet with the Department Tenure Committee before taking action on the recommendation for non-reappointment.

If a probationary appointment is not to be renewed in the first year of service, then written notice must be given to the faculty member by no later than four months before the expiration of the first year of service (i.e., by March 1st). For individuals whose initial appointment year is two terms or less, the next full year (July 1 to June 30) will constitute the first year of service for non-reappointment dates.

If a probationary appointment is not to be renewed in the second year of service, then written notice must be given to the faculty member by no later than six months before the expiration of the second year of service (i.e., by January 1st).

If the appointment is not to be renewed after two or more years of service (i.e., in the third, fourth, or fifth year of service), then written notice must be given to the faculty member by no later than twelve months prior to the termination date of the final year of service (i.e., by June 30).

Non-renewal of a probationary appointment with less advance notice than specified herein shall be subject to the procedural rights as specified in the appropriate policy in the WPI Faculty Handbook and shall only be for the grounds described therein. Administrative personnel who hold academic rank are subject to the foregoing regulations in their capacity as faculty members.

#### **Terminal Appointments**

If, as a result of the mandatory tenure review, tenure is not granted, then a terminal appointment will be offered for only one additional academic year beyond the academic year of the tenure review. The appointment will be at the faculty member's current rank and title and it will be made on the schedule used for the reappointments of tenure-track faculty members beyond their first academic year of service.

#### **Resignations**

If a probationary faculty member desires to terminate an existing appointment at the end of the academic year, or to decline a renewal, that faculty member shall give notice in writing at the earliest opportunity but not later than one month after

receiving notice of renewal; but that faculty member may properly request a waiver of this requirement in case of hardship.

## **b. Initial Appointments, Resignations, and Terminations of Faculty Members with Tenure**

### **i. Initial Appointments of Faculty Members with Tenure**

An initial appointment of a faculty member with tenure is reviewed by the Department Head, the Dean of the appropriate school, and the Provost. The appointment is also reviewed by the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom to see that the candidate's qualifications are commensurate with the tenure criteria for the appropriate track (see Chapter Three: Tenure, Section 3). If the appointment is at the full rank in either track, then it is also reviewed by Committee on Appointments and Promotion to see that the candidate's qualifications are commensurate with the criteria used for promotion to the stated rank in the appropriate track (see Chapter Four: Promotions, Section 2).

Once the Provost has approved the appointment, they forward an official offer letter to the candidate. The precise terms and conditions of every initial appointment of a faculty member with tenure must be stated in writing and be in the possession of both WPI and the faculty member before the appointment is consummated. These terms and conditions must include the rank and title of the appointment and a clear designation that the appointment is with tenure.

### **ii. Review of Faculty Members with Tenure**

At the discretion of each department, a Departmental Peer Review Committee may be formed to review each tenured faculty member's teaching performance every six years. A faculty member may request a more frequent review. The Peer Review Committee will prepare a written report with copies going to the faculty member being reviewed, the Department Head and the departmental file.

### **iii. Resignation of Faculty Members with Tenure**

If a faculty member with tenure desires to resign from an existing appointment at the end of the academic year, that faculty member shall give notice in writing at the earliest opportunity but not later than May 15; but that faculty member may properly request a waiver of this requirement in case of hardship.

### **iv. Termination of Faculty Members with Tenure**

Until retirement of the faculty member with tenure, such an appointment is terminable by WPI only for an adequate cause or on account of extraordinary financial

emergencies after not less than twelve months' notice to the faculty member and subject to the procedures outlined below:

If a tenured appointment is terminated because of financial emergency, then the released faculty member's position will not be filled by a replacement within a period of two years, unless the released faculty member has been offered reappointment with tenure and has declined.

Termination by WPI of an appointment with tenure with less advance notice than specified herein shall be subject to the procedural rights as specified in the appropriate policy in the WPI Faculty Handbook and shall only be for the grounds described therein. Administrative personnel who hold academic rank are subject to the foregoing regulations in their capacity as faculty members.

## **4. Appointment, Reappointment, and Review of Nontenure-Track Faculty Members**

### **a. Secured Nontenure-Track Teaching Faculty Members: Instructors; Senior Instructors; and Assistant, Associate, and (full) Teaching Professors**

Secured nontenure-track teaching faculty members are full-time employees of the University who are hired with the expectation that they will have continuing academic responsibilities at WPI focused on their teaching, and with provisions for a long-term institutional commitment from WPI. In all such appointments, the faculty member's general responsibilities and workload will be documented in the appointment letter, with changes during an appointment mutually agreed to in writing by the faculty member and the Department Head and/or Program Director.

#### **i. Probationary Appointment(s)**

Initial probationary appointments of secure nontenure-track faculty members (with the titles indicated above) will be for a one-year probationary term with the expectation on the part of the University that a three-year appointment will follow, unless in the judgment of the Department Head and/or Program Director (and with the approval of the Dean) the qualifications of the candidate and the circumstances warrant skipping the probationary appointment and advancing to an initial three-year appointment. The probationary nature of the appointment including the expectation of a three-year appointment to follow will be explicitly stated in the appointment letter. In cases where a first-year performance review of the faculty member indicates that a subsequent three-year appointment is not warranted without significant improvement, the initial probationary appointment may be followed by a second probationary appointment for only one additional one-year probationary term.

The evaluation for the initial probationary appointment will be made by a committee consisting of a Department Head and/or Program Director and at least two faculty members. This group could be the same as the Department's standing tenure committee. The initial appointment of Assistant Teaching Professors will require approval of the appropriate Dean and the Provost. The initial appointment of Associate or (full) Teaching Professors will require both review by COAP and approval of the appropriate Dean and the Provost. The candidate for an Assistant, Associate, or (full) Teaching Professor position should have both a Ph.D. degree (or the recognized highest degree for the discipline) and teaching credentials and accomplishments appropriate to the corresponding tenured or tenure-track rank.

## **ii. Lengths of Subsequent Appointments**

Following the probationary appointment(s), the lengths of subsequent appointments will be made sequentially as follows: a first three-year term, a second three-year term, and subsequent terms of no fewer than five years each.

## **iii. Three-year Appointments**

If the faculty member is reappointed following the probationary term(s), the reappointment shall be for a three-year term with the expectation on the part of the University that a second three-year appointment will follow. If the faculty member is reappointed following the first three-year appointment, the reappointment shall be for a second three-year term with the expectation on the part of the University that an appointment of no fewer than five years will follow. Performance reviews must be considered in reappointment decisions.

## **iv. Five-year Appointments**

If the faculty member is reappointed following the second three-year term or following any term of five (or more) years, the reappointment shall be for a term of no fewer than five years with the expectation on the part of the University that an appointment of no fewer than five years will follow. Appointments longer than five years may be made in the discretion of the Department Head and/or Program Director and the Dean, with approval of the Provost. Performance reviews must be considered in reappointment decisions.

## **v. Performance Reviews**

After the initial appointment, the faculty member will have established a record of teaching at WPI. Each spring, a review of teaching performance, based on course evaluations, project evaluations, and other relevant information, will be made by the Department Head and/or Program Director. Annual performance reviews will also take into consideration any other responsibilities and contributions of the faculty

member. These annual reviews will be summarized in writing and will include a rating on a scale of exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or falls below expectations. Copies of the reviews will be shared with the faculty member and kept on file.

#### **vi. Reappointment Decisions**

All reappointment decisions are made with reasonable discretion by the Department Head and/or Program Director, the Dean, and the Provost based solely on the following considerations: performance reviews; elimination or downsizing of a department, program, or number of courses or sections offered as part of a long-term restructuring measure; significant decrease in the need or demand for program offerings when no reassignment is feasible; and financial emergencies that warrant reduction in teaching staff. Performance reviews must be considered in reappointment decisions. When the Department Head and/or Program Director has concerns about the faculty member's performance that might affect the reappointment decision, they will consult with an appropriately composed ad hoc committee of at least two other faculty members. Faculty members may use the Faculty Review Committee process to grieve a non-reappointment decision on all grounds applicable to the FRC process.

#### **vii. Notifications**

If a faculty member on a probationary appointment is not to be reappointed, notification must be given by no later than the end of C-term before the end of the appointment. If a faculty member on a non-probationary appointment is not to be reappointed, notification will be given by no later than one year before the end of the appointment, unless the faculty member falls below expectations in the next-to-last year of the appointment. In that case, notice of non-reappointment can be delayed to the end of C-term of the final year of the appointment to provide the faculty member with additional time to improve their performance.

#### **viii. Just Cause for Disciplinary Action or Terminations During the Term of Any Appointment**

No faculty member will be disciplined, suspended, or terminated during the term of an appointment without just cause, where just cause is defined as (i) misconduct as defined in the Policy on Faculty Conduct, the Policy on Research Conduct, the Sexual Misconduct Policy, or the Title IX Policy (whichever is applicable); or (ii) financial emergency. Any discipline, including suspension or termination, during an appointment may only be imposed pursuant to the process set forth in the relevant policy identified in this paragraph.

## **b. Secured Nontenure-Track Teaching Faculty Members: Professors of Practice**

Professors of Practice are full-time nontenure-track faculty members who, by virtue of their non-academic industry-related experiences, are hired to bring a unique, current area of expertise to teaching. This experience and expertise must be distinct from that which would be brought by a conventional tenured or tenure-track faculty member and should be aligned with a specific institutional need or required area of expertise. In all such appointments, the faculty member's responsibilities and workload will be agreed to, in writing, between the faculty member and department head.

### **i. Term(s) of Appointment**

Initial appointments of Professors of Practice will be for five years. All appointments will be reviewed on an annual basis. In all such appointments, the faculty member's general responsibilities and workload will be documented in the appointment letter, with changes during an appointment mutually agreed to in writing by the faculty member and the Department Head and/or Program Director.

After five years at WPI, if the Professor of Practice has maintained significant relevant currency within the field, has demonstrated high quality performance at WPI, and there remains a strong continued institutional need that still cannot be filled by hiring a tenured or tenure-track faculty member, then a Professor of Practice may receive an additional appointment (reviewed annually) of five years. Subsequent five-year appointments can be made under the same circumstances as the first five-year reappointment.

### **ii. Initial Appointment**

The evaluation for the initial appointment of a Professor of Practice will be made by a search committee consisting of a Department Head and/or Program Director and at least two tenured faculty members. This group could be the same as the Department's standing tenure committee. The initial appointments of Professors of Practice will require both review by COAP and approval of the appropriate Dean and the Provost. The candidate for Professor of Practice should, by virtue of his or her non-academic industry-related experiences, bring a unique current area of expertise to teaching. This experience and expertise must be distinct from that which would be brought by a conventional tenured or tenure-track faculty member and should be aligned with a specific institutional need or required area of expertise. The review by COAP should be based on the extent to which these criteria are met, and on the quality of the candidate's experience to date.



### **iii. Performance Reviews**

After the first year at WPI, the Professor of Practice will have established a record of teaching at WPI. Annual evaluations will include assessment of high quality teaching (based on course evaluations, project evaluations, and other relevant information) and documented evidence that the Professor of Practice has maintained significant relevant currency in the field. These reviews will be made by the Department Head and/or Program Director, the appropriate Dean, and the Provost, and will also take into consideration any other responsibilities and contributions of the faculty member. These annual reviews will include written summaries with copies shared with the faculty member and kept on file.

### **iv. Reappointments (beyond the first five-year appointment)**

#### **Reappointment Criteria**

The candidate for re-appointment as Professor of Practice must, by virtue of their non-academic industry-related experiences, demonstrate that they remain current in their field and continue to bring a unique current area of expertise to teaching, and that their teaching performance is of high quality. This experience, expertise, and continued currency must be distinct from that which would be brought by a conventional tenured or tenure-track faculty member and should be aligned with a specific institutional need or required area of expertise. The professional expertise and continued currency in the field must be supported by documented evidence, such as by reviews from knowledgeable persons external to WPI. Appropriate activities could include such industry-related experiences as summer or part-time positions, production of commercial designs or other artifacts, consulting activities that are material in terms of time and substance, leadership positions in recognized professional societies, relevant, active service on boards of directors, documented continuing professional education experiences, scholarly or professional publications or presentations, and significant participation in professional conferences.

#### **Reappointment Process**

After five years, the Department Head and/or Program Director (with input from members of the department and/or program and the appropriate Dean) may recommend that a Professor of Practice receive subsequent five-year appointments, to be reviewed annually subjected to the annual evaluations described above. These five-year appointments are to be reviewed by COAP and passed on to the Provost for action. These reappointments are contingent on a continued institutional need for the Professor's of Practice specific area of expertise.

The review by COAP should be based on the extent to which the reappointment criteria (above) are met, including on the quality of teaching performance (and of any other activities described in previous appointment letters) at WPI, and on doc-

umented evidence that the Professor of Practice has maintained significant relevant currency in the field.

#### **v. Just Cause for Disciplinary Action or Terminations During the Term of Any Appointment**

No faculty member will be disciplined, suspended, or terminated during the term of an appointment without just cause, where just cause is defined as (i) misconduct as defined in the Policy on Faculty Conduct, the Policy on Research Conduct, the Sexual Misconduct Policy, or the Title IX Policy (whichever is applicable); or (ii) financial emergency. Any discipline, including suspension or termination, during an appointment may only be imposed pursuant to the process set forth in the relevant policy identified in this paragraph.

#### **c. Short-term Nontenure-Track Teaching Faculty Members: Instructors; Senior Instructors; and Assistant, Associate, and (full) Teaching Professors**

Short-term nontenure-track teaching appointments are made to fill temporary institutional teaching needs. Although the titles for these positions are the same as for secure nontenure-track faculty members, the status of their appointments is different, as described below.

##### **i. Term(s) of Appointment**

Appointments of short-term nontenure-track faculty members will be for one-year terms. The short-term nature of the appointment will be explicitly stated in the contract. If the institutional need persists and the faculty member's performance is satisfactory, a subsequent one-year appointment can be made. However, no more than two consecutive short-term one-year contracts may be offered before the faculty member is offered a three-year contract (described in Sections 4.a.ii and 4.a.iii, above) for secured nontenure-track teaching faculty members.

##### **ii. Initial Appointment**

The evaluation for the initial one-year appointment of a short-term nontenure-track faculty member will be made by the Department Head and/or Program Director, Dean, and Provost. The candidates for these positions must have an advanced degree or its equivalent appropriate for the course(s) to be taught. In addition, the candidate must have some level of documented teaching experience appropriate for the expected teaching responsibilities.

### **iii. Performance Reviews**

After the initial appointment, the faculty member will have established a record of teaching at WPI. Performance evaluations, based on available course evaluations, project evaluations, and other relevant information, will be made by the Department Head and/or Program Director (with input from departmental and/or program faculty members), the appropriate Dean, and the Provost.

## **d. Nontenure-Track Research Professors: Assistant, Associate, and (full) Research Professors**

### **i. Term(s) of Appointment**

Terms of appointments of Assistant, Associate, or (full) Research Professors are negotiated on a case-by-case basis with one- or two-year appointments the most common. The titles of Assistant, Associate, and (full) Research Professor will be awarded only to those individuals with both a Ph.D. degree (and the recognized highest degree for the discipline) and with research credentials appropriate to the corresponding tenured or tenure-track rank.

### **ii. Initial Appointment**

The evaluation for the initial appointment of an Assistant, Associate, or (Full) Research Professor will be made by the Department Head and/or Program Director, and members of the WPI Faculty whose research is most relevant to the work to be done by the candidate. The initial appointment of an Assistant Research Professor will require approval of the appropriate Dean and the Provost. The initial appointment of Associate or (full) Research Professors will require both review by COAP and approval of the appropriate Dean and the Provost. The candidate for an Assistant, Associate, or (full) Research Professor position should have both a Ph.D. degree (or the recognized highest degree for the discipline) and research credentials and accomplishments appropriate to the corresponding tenured or tenure-track rank.

### **iii. Performance Reviews**

After the initial appointment, the Assistant, Associate, or (full) Research Professors will have established a record of research at WPI. Continuing performance evaluations, based primarily on research accomplishments at WPI, will be made by the Department Head and/or Program Director, members of the WPI Faculty whose research is most relevant to the work done by the candidate, the appropriate Dean, and the Provost on a year-by-year basis. Annual performance evaluations will also take into consideration any other activities described in the official letter of appointment from the Provost. These annual evaluations will include a written evaluation to be kept on file.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities, Initial Appointments, Evaluations, and Reappointments of Department Heads**

### **a. Roles and Responsibilities of Department Heads**

The position of Department Head is an administrative position. Department Heads report to the Dean of their Department's School (who is referred to in this section as Dean) and are responsible for the operation of their respective academic departments, for the development of the department faculty members, and for the quality of the programs and facilities within those departments.

### **b. Initial Appointment of Department Heads**

(Amended by the Faculty, *May 7, 2024*)

#### **i. Term of Initial Appointment**

The initial appointment for any Department Head is for a five-year period.

#### **ii. Appointment Process**

When a new Department Head is to be selected from either inside or outside of WPI, the Dean will first consult with the faculty members in the department concerned to determine the best course of action in the interests of the department. A department and/or those faculty members within the department wishing to provide its/their input in a confidential and/or anonymous manner should be provided the opportunity to do so. Accounting for this input, and in consultation with the Provost, the Dean will then initiate the search and form a search committee according to the following procedures.

If it is known a year in advance that the current Department Head will not continue in their current role, then the search for the next Department Head will begin early in the next academic year following the year in which the Department Head vacancy first became known. If the search is unsuccessful, then an interim Department Head will be appointed according to Section 5.e below.

A search committee consists of two faculty members elected by the department, one member of the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP) selected by COAP, a faculty member appointed by the Provost, and the Dean or their representative who serves as Chair of the search committee. The search committee will establish its procedures for operation consistent with the following requirements:

The search committee will solicit nominations and applications for the position, evaluate the applicants, and select at least two candidates to interview for the position (unless there is only one applicant in an internal search). As part of the interview

process, the search committee will make arrangements for each of the candidates to meet with the departmental faculty members. The search committee will determine the preferences of the members of the department, and weigh those heavily in arriving at its own preferences.

The Dean submits to the Provost the names of the acceptable candidates as determined by the search committee, the Dean's recommendation, the preferences and comments of the search committee, and the preferences and comments of the departmental faculty members. Whereas collaboration is essential to WPI, Deans are expected to collaborate with other Deans when evaluating Department Heads for appointment in departments where collaboration across schools is significant (as defined by the Provost). The Committee on Appointments and Promotions is given copies of all documents submitted to the Provost concerning the selection.

The Provost, after consultation with the President, generally will appoint one of the acceptable candidates forwarded by the Dean as Department Head. However, if none of the candidates is acceptable to the Provost, the reasons will be discussed with the search committee and the Committee on Appointments and Promotions, and the search committee will continue the selection process.

In this manner, Department Heads are appointed by the Provost upon the recommendation of the Dean and the Committee on Appointments and Promotions and subject to approval by the President.

### **c. Performance Evaluations of Department Heads**

(Amended by the Faculty, *March 13, 2024*)

(Amended by the Faculty, *May 7, 2024*)

#### **i. Purpose and Responsibility**

Performance evaluations are made of each Department Head in order to determine if the department is accomplishing its goals in an effective, efficient and harmonious way. The Dean has the responsibility for conducting these evaluations and for reporting back to the Department Head being evaluated.

#### **ii. Schedule of Evaluations**

Performance evaluations for each Department Head are conducted during the spring of both the second and fourth year of the first five-year appointment, during the spring of only the second year of the second five-year appointment, and during the spring of the second year of any interim appointment. In addition, the Dean, the Committee on Appointments and Promotions, or the Department Head may request an evaluation at any time. A list of the regular schedule for Department Head evaluations is maintained by the Committee on Appointments and Promotions.

### **iii. Evaluation Process**

The Committee on Appointments and Promotions will work with the Faculty Governance Office to distribute a confidential and anonymous questionnaire to all faculty members in the department. The Committee on Appointments and Promotions has the responsibility for preparing and updating the questionnaire, as appropriate. Only the Dean, the Provost, and the Committee on Appointments and Promotions will review the responses.

If either the Committee on Appointments and Promotions, the Dean, or the Provost decides that additional information is needed, then the COAP will make arrangements for its members to meet with each faculty member in the department concerned. The purpose of these individual meetings is to gain a better understanding of any problem that may have been brought out in the questionnaire. Complete confidentiality will be maintained by the Committee concerning the views of individuals.

The Committee on Appointments and Promotions will discuss all of the information obtained and will prepare a summary describing the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Department Head being evaluated. The COAP will send the summary letter to the Dean who, after reviewing the contents, will meet with the COAP to discuss the case. Only the Dean, Provost and the President may read the COAP letter.

Whereas collaboration is essential to WPI, Deans are expected to collaborate with other Deans when evaluating Department Heads in departments where collaboration across schools is significant (as defined by the Provost).

The Dean will then meet with the Department Head to discuss the evaluation and also send a letter to the Department Head that summarizes the performance evaluation. A copy of that letter will be sent to the Chair of the Committee on Appointments and Promotions.

## **d. Reappointment of Department Heads**

### **i. Term and Limits of Reappointment**

Only one reappointment may be made, for a second term of five years and for a maximum total of ten years of service as Department Head, unless special circumstances exist.

### **ii. Reappointment Process**

The reappointment of a Department Head for a second term will involve the following procedure.

A. In the spring of the fourth year of the Department Head's first term, the Committee on Appointments and Promotions will evaluate the Department Head for

reappointment. The evaluation will involve:

- Review of all written materials obtained in the second and fourth year reviews (as described above in Section 5c).
- Confidential interviews with all faculty members in the department;
- An interview with the Department Head involved.
- Collection and review of any other information that COAP believes will influence the evaluation.

B. The Committee on Appointments and Promotions will report its recommendation in writing concerning reappointment to the Dean before the end of D-term of the fourth year of the Department Head's first term.

C. The Dean will provide the Provost both their recommendations and a copy of the Committee on Appointments and Promotions report concerning evaluation and reappointment. Whereas collaboration is essential to WPI, Deans are expected to collaborate with other Deans when evaluating Department Heads for reappointment in departments where collaboration across schools is significant (as defined by the Provost).

D. The Provost, after consultation with the President, will decide on the reappointment. The Provost will discuss their decision with the Committee on Appointments and Promotions.

## **e. Appointments and Terms of Interim Department Heads**

(Adopted by the Faculty, *May 7, 2024*)

### **i. Appointments of Interim Department Heads**

Interim Department Heads should only be appointed due to unanticipated circumstances. If, in a given academic year, due to unanticipated circumstances, it is necessary to appoint an interim Department Head, then the Dean will consult with the faculty members in the department concerned to determine the choice that is in the best interests of the department. A department and/or those faculty members within the department wishing to provide its/their input in a confidential and/or anonymous manner will be provided the opportunity to do so. The Dean will share the input from the department with the Provost and will make a recommendation concerning the interim appointment. The interim appointment will be made by the Provost in timely fashion and in the same academic year in which the vacancy occurs.

## **ii. Term Limits of Interim Department Heads**

A Department should not be led by Interim Department Head(s) for more than two consecutive years. For this reason, the search for a new Department Head will begin by no later than early in the next academic year following the year in which the Department Head vacancy first became known. If the search is not successful, then an interim appointment will be made by the Provost (with input from the department and with a recommendation from the Dean) for an additional year (even if it is beyond the second) while the search for a new Department Head is continued.

## **6. Guidelines for Searches to Fill Academic Administrative Positions**

(Approved by the Faculty, *May 2007*)

### **a. Academic Administrative Positions**

An academic administrative position is defined as a faculty appointment in which the primary responsibilities of the position are to lead faculty members and to work with and on behalf of them to oversee substantial elements of WPI's degree-granting undergraduate or graduate programs, and/or to provide leadership, vision, and guidance in working with and on behalf of faculty members to enhance their scholarship. Academic administrative positions are held by faculty members who work with other faculty members across several departments, programs, or other similar academic units. Examples of academic administrative positions include the Provost, Associate or Assistant Provosts, and the Deans and Associate Deans of Arts & Sciences, Engineering, Business, Global School, Undergraduate Studies, and Graduate Studies. Footnote 1. Non-academic administrative positions include, but are not limited to those in admissions, enrollment management, student life, research administration, corporate and professional education, development, and marketing.

### **b. Formation of the Search Committee**

When an academic administrative position is to be filled from either inside or outside of WPI, a search committee of nine members is formed consisting of three elected faculty members, one faculty member appointed by the Committee on Governance, one faculty member appointed by the Provost, two members appointed by the President, and two students appointed jointly by the President and by COG. The President, the Provost, and COG will collaborate on all appointments to ensure balance of the committee's membership and to select the Chair of the search committee. If the search is for the Provost, the President will make three appointments.

If the responsibilities of the position cross all departments, then all faculty members



participate in the process to choose the three elected members of the search committee. In this case, there is no restriction on the departmental affiliations of the faculty members who may be appointed. If, on the other hand, the responsibilities of the position do not cross all departments and programs, then the elected members of the committee will be chosen by those faculty members and from among those departments that fall under the responsibilities of the position. In this case, at least one of the appointed faculty members must be from outside the academic departments that fall under the responsibilities of the position.

### **c. Conducting the Search**

The work of the search committee begins when the Provost (or the President, when the search is for Provost) provides it with a complete description of the responsibilities of the position. There is an understanding between the Provost, the President, the search committee, the candidates, and the WPI community that the job description will not change substantially throughout the search and for a reasonable period of time after an appointment is made to fill the position. At the outset of the search, the committee will meet with representatives from the Division of Talent and Inclusion for advice on relevant legal matters, and, throughout the search, will consult with those representatives whenever it is necessary to do so.

The job description will be used in soliciting nominations for the position. The search committee will evaluate the applicants and select appropriate candidates to be interviewed for the position. It is the responsibility of the search committee to conduct the search in such a manner that all members of the Faculty, administration, and staff who would interact in a substantive way with the appointee be given the opportunity to review the candidate's resume, meet with the candidate, ask questions of the candidate, and provide both written and oral feedback to the committee. The search committee may invite members of the staff to meet with the committee and/or serve as resources for the search.

Because input from students is so highly valued, it is also the responsibility of the search committee to solicit input from appropriate representatives of the student body, arrange meetings between students and each candidate, and obtain written and oral input from the students about the candidates with whom they have met.

### **d. Evaluating the Candidates**

The search committee will provide a detailed evaluation of each candidate to the Provost, with its preferences made clear and with a digest of the feedback from the community included. The Provost will then share the information with the President, and jointly the President and Provost will select one of the candidates to fill the open position. If the search is for a Dean, then the President and Provost will select a candidate to be recommended to the Board of Trustees for approval. If the search

is for the Provost, then the committee's evaluations will be given directly to the President, who will make the selection for approval by the Board of Trustees. If none of the candidates is acceptable to them, the President and/or the Provost will discuss their reasons with the search committee, and will either request that the search committee continue the search process, or that the search begin anew with the formation of a new search committee and a new solicitation for the position.

## **7. Definitions, Conditions, and Procedures for Faculty Joint Appointments**

(Endorsed by COG, *February 10, 2005*)

### **a. Dual Appointment**

Faculty member carries current rank and title in both the designated home and in the second departments (e.g. Professor of Computer Science and Professor of Robotics Engineering).

Salary is split between the two departments with set percentages of salary allocated to the home and second departments.

Faculty member participates in all activities of both departments with full rights and privileges.

Home department is listed first.

### **b. Collaborative Appointment**

Faculty member carries current rank and title in both the designated home department and in the second department (e.g. Professor of Computer Science and Professor of Robotics Engineering).

Salary is fully budgeted in home department.

Appointment is made to foster interdepartmental collaboration and to facilitate student advising, teaching and research. Course teaching would not be expected in the second department. However, advising, project advising, graduate advising (including thesis and dissertation advising) and research would be expected.

Faculty member can be advisor of record for all project, thesis, and dissertation work in both departments.

Home department is listed first.

Appointment in the second department will be for a maximum of five years and renewable on request.

### **c. Procedure to Establish a Faculty Joint Appointment**

To request either type of joint appointment, a memo bearing the signature of both department heads should be forwarded to the Provost, specifying which type of appointment and outlining the reason(s) for the request. If the Provost approves the request, an appointment letter will be sent to the faculty member formalizing the appointment and specifying both the type (dual or collaborative) and the duration of the appointment (if it is collaborative).

## **8. Policies on Leaves**

### **a. Policy on Sabbatical Leaves**

#### **i. Basic Objectives**

Leaves of absence, and particularly sabbatical leaves, are among the most important means by which a teacher's effectiveness may be enhanced, a scholar's usefulness enlarged, and an institution's academic program strengthened and developed. A sound program of leaves is therefore of vital importance to WPI, and faculty members are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this mechanism to help promote their professional competence. The major purpose of leaves is to provide opportunity for continued professional growth and new, or renewed, intellectual achievement through study, research, and writing.

The term "sabbatical" normally applies to a leave of absence in which a faculty member receives partial or full salary from WPI. Faculty member exchanges between two institutions, leaves without salary, and the performance of full-time duties assigned by WPI at off-campus locations are not part of the sabbatical program.

Because both the institute and the individual benefit as a result of a sabbatical leave, both share in the cost of such a leave. At WPI such sharing is both through financial support by the institute and through the assumption by colleagues of the academic responsibilities of absent faculty members. A faculty member should apply for a leave far enough in advance that temporary replacements of high quality can be obtained. Each application for sabbatical leave should include a well-designed and serious program with clearly stated objectives that will maximize the professional development of the faculty member involved.

Sabbatical leaves may be taken for a full academic year or a half academic year. All full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members are eligible to apply for a full-year or half-year sabbatical leave after six years of full-time service since their most recent hiring at WPI or since their previous sabbatical. Time spent on unpaid leave or less than half-time activity, although considered continuous service, does not count as full-time service toward sabbatical leave.

## **ii. Financial Arrangements**

- a. A full year sabbatical leave is taken at one-half of the faculty member's academic year salary. Half-year leaves are taken at full salary. If the faculty member obtains salary support from outside sources, WPI's contribution will not exceed that required to maintain the faculty member's normal salary. Exceptions to this policy must be negotiated before the leave starts.
- b. Faculty members on sabbatical leave will receive WPI benefits based only on actual WPI compensation.
- c. WPI, on occasion, may provide some displacement expense to faculty members who leave the campus on sabbatical leave for an entire academic year, depending on the particular circumstances.
- d. Funds will be provided to departments with faculty members on sabbatical leaves to cover necessary teaching obligations.

## **iii. Procedures for Review and Award**

- a. Faculty members should submit requests for sabbatical leaves to their Dean on or before December 15 for proposed leaves in the following academic year. An application for a sabbatical leave must contain all the supporting information including the objectives of the sabbatical leave and the benefits to the faculty member, the department, and to WPI. The application should also include information on previous leave(s) of absence taken by the faculty member, past contributions to WPI, a letter of invitation from any institution at which the faculty member plans to work, and the sources and amounts of external funding.
- b. The application should be accompanied by supporting documentation from the faculty member's department head. This documentation should include a review of the faculty member's proposed sabbatical program with regard to its appropriateness; the impact of the sabbatical on department operations; and the department recommendation on the proposed sabbatical. In the case of an application for a sabbatical leave by a department head, this additional documentation will be supplied by the appropriate Dean.
- c. The appropriate Dean reviews all application materials and supporting documentation, and forwards their recommendation to the Provost with copies of the sabbatical checklist and the recommendation to the Committee on Appointments and Promotion. The Committee on Appointments and Promotion will maintain record-keeping and monitoring role.
- d. The Provost reviews all leave applications, together with recommendations from the Deans, makes final determination of the requests, and sends copies of

the decision letters to the Committee on Appointments and Promotions. The Committee on Appointment and Promotions will maintain record-keeping and monitoring role.

e. Notification of the award will be made no later than April 15.

## **b. Unpaid Leaves**

On occasion, faculty members may wish to pursue a professional opportunity off-campus and request a leave of absence without salary and fringe benefits. WPI expects the host institution to assume the institutional costs of benefits. These leaves can be for periods of time that fit in with the academic program, up to a maximum of 2 years, and should involve experience in government, industry, or academia that contributes to the professional development of the faculty member. This type of leave requires the approval of the appropriate department head, Dean, and the Provost.

When a faculty member takes an unpaid leave the department may employ replacements at salaries up to the normal budgeted salary of the faculty member on leave. Any surplus in the budgeted salary accrues to the WPI general account.

Unpaid leave requests should take the form of sabbatical leave requests, which are accompanied by documentation from the department head.

## **Appendix A**

### **Sample Appointment Letter for all Teaching Professors and Instructors Holding Secured Nontenure-Track Teaching Appointments**

(Approved by the Faculty, *May 6, 2021*)

(Approved by the Board of Trustees, *May 14, 2021*)

[Date]

[Insert Name]

[Address]

[Address]

[City, State ZIP]

**RE: Offer of Appointment for [INSERT TITLE]**

Dear [Name]:

On behalf of Worcester Polytechnic Institute ("WPI"), and upon the recommendation of [Dean] and [Department Head and/or Program Director], I am pleased to offer you a non-tenure appointment with the following details:

Term of Appointment: [1 / 3 / 3 / 5 / 5+] years (Secured Contract)

Title: [insert]  
Department: [insert]  
Salary: [insert]  
Official Hire Date: [insert]  
Appointment (on campus) Official Hire Date: [insert first day of academic year]

Our [Year/Year] academic year begins on [Date] and ends with Commencement on [Date]. Faculty salaries are paid in twelve (12) equal monthly installments on the last business day of each month.

If, as I hope, you find this offer to be satisfactory, please indicate your acceptance by signing, dating, and returning the original letter no later than [Date]. If you require any additional time to consider this offer, please contact [Name].

Please note that item 1 only applies to new appointees and only needs to be completed once.

By accepting this offer, you agree to the following terms, as applicable, to your specific appointment:

1. **Eligibility for Employment.** Your offer of employment is contingent upon:  
(i) complying with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, as amended by providing proof of eligibility to work in the United States through completion of the I-9 form in the online onboarding within (3) three business days of your Official Hire Date; (ii) obtaining and maintaining the necessary visa paperwork for travel to, and work in, the United States, as appropriate; and (iii) a successful background check as detailed in WPI's Background Check Policy. If the result of the background check is not satisfactory, this appointment is voidable by WPI, consistent with the Background Check Policy. You will receive a separate email from WPI's external vendor, HireRight on how to authorize this process.
2. **Benefits.** In addition to your compensation, WPI offers a comprehensive benefits package which includes medical, dental, life and disability insurance, holidays, and additional benefits that will be discussed during orientation. Summary plans and additional information are available here. Faculty are required, as a condition of employment, to begin participation in the WPI Retirement Plan upon the attainment of one (1) year of service at WPI. Please note that you must make your elections for benefits online within thirty (30) days from your Official Hire Date in order to receive benefits for the remainder of the calendar year. WPI reserves the right to change its benefits package at its sole discretion.

Please contact the Benefits Partner in Human Resources, Division for Talent and Inclusion office at [benefits@wpi.edu](mailto:benefits@wpi.edu) or 508-831-5470 if you have any questions.

3. **Protections.** WPI guarantees it shall not retaliate against you based on

your exercise of the full range of academic freedom, as defined in the WPI Faculty Handbook, including your participation in faculty governance and your guaranteed right to express your views boldly and without reprisal or impact on reappointment or termination decisions. Additionally, WPI guarantees your access to the grievance procedures as set forth in the WPI Faculty Handbook.

WPI is committed to maintaining a positive work environment and promoting a workplace free from discrimination and harassment to support the academic and research mission of the University and ensuring all members of our community can contribute to their fullest potential. For WPI's Notice of Non-Discrimination, click [here](#). All new hires will be required to complete training on the topic of Anti-Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment.

4. **Initial Appointment for New Hires.** New hires shall be appointed by the Department Head and/or Program Director, with approval of the Dean, for an initial probationary one (1) year appointment, with an expectation of a three (3) year appointment to follow. If the appointment begins in January, the initial probationary appointment shall be for one and one-half (1.5) years, to allow the new hire to compile an adequate teaching record for purposes of a performance review. The Department Head and/or Program Director, with approval of the Dean, may offer an initial three (3) year appointment to a new hire based on their qualifications.
5. **Reappointment Terms.** In cases where the Department Head and/or Program Director decides that the faculty member's performance does not yet warrant a 3-year appointment, the initial probationary appointment may be followed by only one additional probationary 1-year appointment. If the Department Head and/or Program Director, with approval of the Dean, decides to reappoint you following the initial 1-year appointment (or second one 1-year probationary appointment, as applicable), the reappointment shall be for a term of 3 years with an expectation of a 3-year appointment to follow. Following the faculty member's first 3-year appointment, if the Department Head and/or Program Director, with approval of the Dean, reappoints the faculty member, it will be to a second 3-year appointment with an expectation of an appointment of no fewer than 5 years to follow. Following the faculty member's second 3-year year appointment, if the Department Head and/or Program Director, with approval of the Dean, reappoints the faculty member, it will be to an appointment of no fewer than 5 years with an expectation of an appointment of no fewer than 5 years to follow. Only the Provost (following consultations with the Dean and Department Head and/or Program Director) may make appointments longer than 5 years.
6. **Responsibilities and Workload.** Following discussions between you and the Department Head and/or Program Director, your responsibilities and workload are to be determined by the Department Head and/or Program Director and

reflected in writing and attached hereto as Exhibit A. No changes in responsibilities and workload may be made during an appointment unless mutually agreed upon between you and the Department Head and/or Program Director in writing.

7. **Performance Reviews.** Each year, during "C" or "D" term, you will be reviewed by the Department Head and/or Program Director based on your overall performance, with primary focus on the quality of your teaching and your responsibilities as reflected in Exhibit A consistent with any changes made as described in item 6 above. Reviews shall be summarized in writing and shall include a rating on a scale of: Falls Below Expectations; Meets Expectations; or Exceeds Expectations. Student evaluations shall not be the only source of information for evaluations. Performance reviews will be considered in reappointment decisions.
8. **Grounds for Reappointment / Non-Reappointment.** Decisions whether to reappoint you are made in the reasonable discretion of the Department Head and/or Program Director and Dean based on: performance; or elimination or downsizing of a department, program, or number of courses or sections offered as part of a long-term restructuring measure; or significant decrease in the need/demand for program offerings when no reassignment is feasible; or financial emergencies that warrant reduction in teaching staff. You may grieve non-reappointment through the Faculty Review Committee grievance process.
9. **Notice of Non-Reappointment.** WPI will notify you of its decision not to reappointment you based on the following schedule:

Appointment Term	Notice of Non-Reappointment
1-year appointees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No later than the end of "C" term</li> </ul>
3-year appointees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If rated "meets expectations" or "exceeds expectations" in year 2, then 1-year notice; and</li> <li>• If most recently rated "falls below expectations" in year 2, then no later than end of "C" term in final year of appointment.<sup>^</sup></li> </ul>
5-year appointees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If rated "meets expectations" or "exceeds expectations" in year 4, then 1-year notice; and</li> <li>• If most recently rated "falls below expectations" in year 4, then no later than end of "C" term in final year of appointment.<sup>^</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>^</sup> The intention is to provide faculty members with a rating of "falls below expecta-



tions" additional time to improve their performance.

10. **Discipline and Termination During Appointment.** You will not be disciplined, suspended, or discharged without "just cause," which is defined as: (i) misconduct as defined in the Policy on Faculty Conduct, the Policy on Research Conduct, or the Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy (whichever is applicable); or (ii) financial emergency. Any discipline, including suspension or termination, during an appointment may only be imposed pursuant to the process set forth in the relevant policy identified in this paragraph.

Your signature constitutes your formal acceptance of this appointment and confirms that no promises, representations, or agreements that are inconsistent with any of the terms of this offer have been made to you, or with you, by anyone at WPI. You also hereby represent and warrant that you are not now subject to any agreement which is or would be inconsistent or in conflict with the obligations you will have as an employee of WPI.

If you have any questions concerning this offer, please feel free to contact [Name and Contact Info].

With best regards,

[Name of Provost]  
Senior Vice President and Provost

I hereby accept the position as described in the above letter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Sample Appointment Letter for all Professors of Practice Foonote 3

(Approved by the Faculty, *May 27, 2021*)

(Approved by the Board of Trustees, *May 27, 2021*)

[Date]

[Insert Name]

[Address]

[Address]

[City, State ZIP]

**RE: Offer of Appointment for Professor of Practice**

Dear [Name]:

On behalf of Worcester Polytechnic Institute ("WPI"), and upon the recommendation of [Dean] and [Department Head and/or Program Director], I am pleased to offer you a non-tenure appointment with the following details:

Term of Appointment: 5 years  
Title: [Professor of Practice]  
Department: [insert]  
Salary: [\$ insert]  
Official Hire Date: [insert]  
Employment (on campus) Start Date: [insert]

Our [Year/Year] academic year begins on [Date] and ends with Commencement on [Date]. Faculty salaries are paid in 12 equal monthly installments on the last business day of each month.

If, as I hope, you find this offer to be satisfactory, please indicate your acceptance by signing, dating, and returning the original letter no later than [Date]. If you require any additional time to consider this offer, please contact [Department Head/Program Director].

Please note that the first item below only applies to new appointees and only needs to be completed once.

By accepting this offer, you agree to the following terms, as applicable, to your specific appointment:

1. **Eligibility for Employment.** Your offer of employment is contingent upon:  
(i) complying with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, as amended by providing proof of eligibility to work in the United States through completion of the I-9 form in the online onboarding within 3 business days of your Official Hire Date; (ii) obtaining and maintaining the necessary visa paperwork for travel to, and work in, the United States, as appropriate; and (iii) a successful background check as detailed in WPI's Background Check Policy. If the result of the background check is not satisfactory, this appointment is voidable by WPI, consistent with the Background Check Policy. You will receive a separate email from WPI's external vendor, HireRight on how to authorize this process.
2. **Benefits.** In addition to your compensation, WPI offers a comprehensive benefits package which includes medical, dental, life and disability insurance, holidays, and additional benefits that will be discussed during orientation. Summary plans and additional information are available here. Faculty are required, as a condition of employment, to begin participation in the WPI Retirement Plan upon the attainment of 1 year of service at WPI. Please note that you must make your elections for benefits online within 30 days from your start date in order to receive benefits for the remainder of the calendar year. WPI

reserves the right to change its benefits package at its sole discretion.

Please contact the Benefits Partner in Human Resources, Division for Talent and Inclusion office at [benefits@wpi.edu](mailto:benefits@wpi.edu) or 508-831-5470 if you have any questions.

- 3. Protections.** WPI guarantees it shall not retaliate against you based on your exercise of the full range of academic freedom, as defined in the WPI Faculty Handbook, including your participation in faculty governance and your guaranteed right to express your views boldly and without reprisal or impact on reappointment or termination decisions. Additionally, WPI guarantees your access to the grievance procedures as set forth in the WPI Faculty Handbook.

WPI is committed to maintaining a positive work environment and promoting a workplace free from discrimination and harassment to support the academic and research mission of the University and ensuring all members of our community can contribute to their fullest potential. For WPI's Notice of Non-Discrimination, [click here](#). All new hires will be required to complete training on the topic of Anti-Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment.

- 4. Initial Appointment for New Hires.** Initial appointments of Professors of Practice will be for 5 years. The initial appointments are made on the recommendation of the Department Head and/or Program Director and require both review by the Committee on Appointments and Promotions (COAP) and approval of the appropriate Dean and the Provost.
- 5. Reappointment Terms.** The Department Head and/or Program Director (with input from members of the department and/or program and the appropriate Dean) may recommend to COAP that a Professor of Practice receive a subsequent 5-year appointment. These 5 year reappointments are to be reviewed by COAP and passed on to the Provost for action. If a Professor of Practice is reappointed, the reappointment shall be for a term of 5 years.
- 6. Responsibilities and Workload.** Following discussions between you and the Department Head and/or Program Director, your responsibilities and workload are to be determined by the Department Head and/or Program Director and reflected in writing and attached hereto as Exhibit A. No changes in responsibilities and workload may be made during an appointment unless mutually agreed upon between you and the Department Head and/or Program Director in writing.
- 7. Performance Reviews.** Each year, during "C" or "D" term, your performance will be reviewed. Annual reviews will include assessment of high quality teaching (based on course evaluations, project evaluations, and other relevant information) and documented evidence that the Professor of Practice has maintained significant relevant currency in the field. These evaluations will be made by the Department Head and/or Program Director, the appropriate Dean, and

the Provost, and will also take into consideration any other activities described in Exhibit A of the official letter of appointment from the Provost consistent with any changes made as described in item 6 above. These annual reviews will include written summaries with copies shared with the faculty member and kept on file.

8. **Grounds for Reappointment / Non-Reappointment.** Professors of Practice to be reappointed should, by virtue of their non-academic industry-related experiences, continue to bring a unique current area of expertise to teaching. This experience and expertise must be distinct from that which would be brought by a conventional tenured or tenure-track faculty member and should be aligned with a specific institutional need or required area of expertise. The reappointment should be based on the extent to which these reappointment criteria are met, on the quality of teaching performance (and of any other activities described in previous appointment letters consistent with any changes made as described in item 6 above) at WPI, and on documented evidence that the Professor of Practice has maintained significant relevant currency in the field. These reappointments are contingent on a continued institutional need for your specific area of expertise. You may grieve non-reappointment through the Faculty Review Committee grievance process.
9. **Notice of Non-Reappointment.** WPI will notify you 1 year before the end of your 5-year appointment of a decision by the Department Head and/or Program Director not to recommend you to COAP for reappointment. Alternatively, if you are recommended by the Department Head and/or Program Director to COAP for reappointment, then WPI will notify you by no later than the beginning of "D" term of the final year of your 5-year appointment of the Provost's decision not to reappoint you.
10. **Discipline and Termination During Appointment.** You will not be disciplined, suspended, or discharged without "just cause," which is defined as: (i) misconduct as defined in the Policy on Faculty Conduct, the Policy on Research Conduct, or the Title IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy (whichever is applicable); or (ii) financial emergency. Any discipline, including suspension or termination, during an appointment may only be imposed pursuant to the process set forth in the relevant policy identified in this paragraph.

Your signature constitutes your formal acceptance of this appointment and confirms that no promises, representations, or agreements that are inconsistent with any of the terms of this offer have been made to you, or with you, by anyone at WPI. You also hereby represent and warrant that you are not now subject to any agreement which is or would be inconsistent or in conflict with the obligations you will have as an employee of WPI.

If you have any questions concerning this offer, please feel free to contact [Department

Head/Program Director].

With best regards,

[Name of Provost]  
Senior Vice President and Provost

I hereby accept the position as described in the above letter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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