



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

POLICY TITLE	Selection and Responsibilities of Department Leadership	Policy Number	644
Section	Academics	Approval Date	January 30, 2025
Subsection	Faculty	Effective Date	January 30, 2025
Responsible Office	Office of the Provost/Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs	Last Review	January 30, 2025

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 Academic department leadership fulfills essential roles in the governance and operation of an institution of higher education. This policy defines and describes the roles, responsibilities, authority, and selection procedure for a department’s chair, assistant chairs, and program coordinators at Utah Valley University.

2.0 REFERENCES

- 2.1 UVU Policy 114 *Conflict of Interest and Commitment*
- 2.2 UVU Policy 323 *Guidelines for Consulting*
- 2.3 UVU Policy 633 *Faculty Performance Evaluation and Feedback*
- 2.4 UVU Policy 641 *Salaried Faculty Workload—Academic Year*
- 2.5 UVU Policy 643 *Salaried Faculty Summer Teaching*

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 Academic coordinator: A tenured or tenure-track faculty member who oversees a program or emphasis within an academic department and reports to the department chair. This faculty member is selected by the faculty in the program and ratified by the department chair.

3.2 Academic program: A combination of courses leading to a degree, certificate, minor, or major.

3.3 Assistant chair: A tenured or tenure-track faculty member who assumes specific, delegated tasks. This faculty member is selected by the chair and ratified by voting faculty.

3.4 Department: A group of salaried, benefits-eligible faculty members from the same or related disciplines who are authorized by the Provost to function as an academic unit.



3.5 Department chair: A tenured faculty member who leads the management of an academic department.

3.6 Departmental complexity: Departmental complexity may include, but is not bound by, factors such as the number of full-time and part-time faculty and staff reporting to the chair, student enrollment, number of majors, officially designated labs, special assignments such as discipline-specific accreditation, and other official UVU responsibilities that require significant time commitment. Department complexity is determined by each dean in consultation with their department chairs.

3.7 Good standing: The status of an employee who has no imposed or pending disciplinary action.

3.8 Governance Credit Hour Equivalents (GCHE): The unit of measure for participating in academic and university governance as defined by the SVCAA and in accordance with Utah Board of Higher Education guidelines. GCHE establishes equivalents for activities including, but not limited to, serving as a program coordinator, department chair, or senate officer. GCHE also establishes equivalents for committee loads beyond a reasonable level.

3.9 Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) Committee: A group of tenured faculty members that evaluates faculty peers and recommends for or against retention, tenure, or promotion. RTP committees may serve a single academic department, a cluster of academic departments in the same school, or an entire school.

3.10 Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) criteria: Department criteria that establish expectations for teaching, scholarship/creative work, and service for the purposes of retention, tenure, and promotion.

3.11 Voting faculty or faculty member: An employee hired into a faculty position categorized as permanent, full-time faculty.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Scope of This Policy

4.1.1 This policy applies to academic departments. It prescribes the selection procedures for department leadership, describes the responsibilities they are expected to fulfill, and establishes their authority in the governance of academic departments. Department leadership includes department chairs, assistant chairs, and academic coordinators.

4.2 Duties and Responsibilities of Department Chairs



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4.2.1 The chair ensures that assigned departmental and institutional work is completed in an equitable, efficient, effective, and timely manner. A department chair shall adapt and perform the duties and responsibilities described below in ways relevant to the unique governance needs of their department and school/college. The roles, responsibilities, and areas of performance for a chair will be established in collaboration with their dean and include, but are not limited to, the following:

4.2.1.1 Represents the department to the dean and other administration on issues that affect the department, and helps create and carry out the school/college and university strategic plans and mission;

4.2.1.2 Represents the mission, goals, and interests of the school/college and university administration to the department;

4.2.1.3 Manages the affairs of the department in accordance with university policy, including, but not limited to, budget; workload; scheduling; instructional issues; and hiring and performance evaluations of faculty, staff, and student employees;

4.2.1.4 Serves as the chief representative and advocate of an academic department and its faculty, staff, and students;

4.2.1.5 Supervises academic staff within their reporting line and regularly consults with academic advisors; and

4.2.1.6 Performs other responsibilities as described in university policy.

4.2.2 The dean and incoming chair shall negotiate with the outgoing chair the roles and responsibilities the outgoing chair will assume when returning to full-time teaching.

4.2.3 Department chairs may not hold additional administrative positions with GCHE except under rare circumstances that must be approved by the dean and Academic Affairs.

4.3 Duties and Responsibilities of Assistant Chairs

4.3.1 An assistant chair supports the work and role of the department chair.

4.3.2 An assistant chair serves as acting chair of the department in the case of a chair's prolonged absence or on urgent matters when the chair is unavailable.

4.3.3 The chair negotiates with the dean any additional duties and responsibilities of an assistant chair. The assistant chair may be consulted in these negotiations.

4.3.3.1 A chair may delegate any responsibility to an assistant chair except for those responsibilities for which delegation is explicitly prohibited by university policy.



4.3.4 The department chair, in collaboration with their dean, determines the number of assistant chairs and their compensation.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Eligible Voters

5.1.1 Tenure-track and tenured faculty are eligible voters.

5.1.2 At the discretion of the dean, departments may determine whether full-time, non-tenured faculty and full-time staff are eligible to vote. Departments may also determine the process including whether the vote will be anonymous.

5.1.3 Tenure-track and tenured faculty vote to determine whether to include multi-year, full-time, non-tenure track faculty and full-time staff as eligible voters.

5.1.4 Tenure-track and tenured faculty shall have the majority in eligible voters.

5.2 Selection Process for Department Chair [Nominee]

5.2.1 A chair, interim chair, or external chair shall be elected by a majority vote of the voting faculty and must be approved by the dean and Provost. The Provost will make the final decision.

5.2.2 Except in extenuating circumstances, the election for a new chair will be held at the latest in November of the final year of the current chair's term. New terms of service begin July 1 unless otherwise agreed upon by the chair, the dean, and the Deputy Provost.

5.2.3 The department chair shall be elected from among the tenured faculty members of the department. In extenuating circumstances, an interim department chair who is tenured in another department may be appointed by the dean and ratified by the department until a tenured faculty member within the department is in good standing and the extenuating circumstance is resolved (see section 5.4).

5.2.3.1 Extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to, discontinuation of a department, merging of departments, lack of a tenured faculty member, resignation or discontinuance of the chair, or other extenuating circumstances as agreed to by the dean and Academic Affairs.

5.2.4 A permanent, full-time faculty member from the department may nominate themselves or another qualified candidate. When a faculty member wishes to nominate a potential candidate, the nominating faculty member must obtain the potential candidate's permission before the name can be placed on the ballot.



5.2.5 The dean's office shall

5.2.5.1 collect nominations,

5.2.5.2 ensure that nominees give their permission to be nominated,

5.2.5.3 ensure that all nominees are in good standing,

5.2.5.4 ensure that all nominees are not subject to a current NOIN (Notice of Improvement Needed) or PIP (Performance Improvement Plan),

5.2.5.5 prepare the ballots,

5.2.5.6 distribute the ballots manually or electronically to all eligible voters, and

5.2.5.7 gather all ballots within one week of distribution.

5.2.6 If there are two or more candidates, the department may use any election method they desire, but this choice must be approved by the dean. The election method must be identified in advance of nominations and include a provision for resolving ties.

5.2.7 When the elected chair is permanently unable to start their term, a new election must be held in accordance with the process above.

5.2.8 The faculty's elected choice for chair is subject to the approval of the dean and the Provost. If the dean or Provost does not approve, they must explain the reasons for their decision in writing to the voting faculty to the extent that it is transparent, practicable, and legally appropriate.

5.3 Selection Process for Interim Department Chair

5.3.1 When a chair cannot complete the full term of service, the voting faculty will elect an interim chair. The interim chair will serve the remainder of the academic year or until a new chair is elected and the new chair begins their term on July 1. This appointment and ratification shall be conducted in accordance with section 5.2.

5.4 Selection of External Interim Chair

5.4.1 When a chair is needed and no eligible candidate is available from within the department, the dean, in consultation with the faculty and the Provost, shall solicit nominees for an external interim chair from within the school or college. In extenuating circumstances, candidates may be sought from another area of the University. This appointment and ratification shall be conducted in accordance with section 5.2.3.



5.4.2 When a chair cannot complete the full term of service and no eligible candidate is available from within the department, the dean, in consultation with the faculty and the Provost, shall solicit nominees for an external interim chair from within the school or college. In extenuating circumstances, candidates may be sought from another area of the University. The external interim chair will serve the remainder of the academic year or until a new chair is elected and the new chair begins their term on July 1. This appointment and ratification shall be conducted in accordance with section 5.2.

5.5 Term of Service of Department Chair

5.5.1 A chair will serve a three-year term. Faculty may serve an unlimited number of terms as chair but are limited to serving two consecutive three-year terms unless there are no eligible candidates. Serving as interim chair does not count toward the limit of two consecutive terms.

5.5.2 The appointment of the department chair is a twelve-month appointment and includes administrative duties throughout the year, including summer, though summer duties may be light depending on the department needs. The department chair's nine-month faculty contract is not affected.

5.5.3 As faculty, the chair has the option to teach during summer in accordance with department or college practice. Chairs shall be compensated for summer teaching in accordance with university and college/school practice. The chair and dean shall determine summer workload, including teaching and administrative duties. Negotiated agreements shall be in writing.

5.5.4 As faculty, the chair has the option to perform external consulting work in accordance with university policy and department or college/school practice (see UVU Policy 114 *Conflict of Interest and Commitment* and Policy 323 *Guidelines for Consulting*).

5.6 Compensation for Department Chair

5.6.1 The department chair shall receive a stipend and a reduction in teaching workload in recognition of the leadership and the extra responsibilities. In consultation with the dean, the chair's stipend and reduction in teaching workload should be based on departmental complexity and assigned responsibilities. The reduction in teaching workload must be commensurate with the amount of time the chair engages in administrative duties.

5.6.1.1 Stipends and workloads must not significantly differ among departments with similar complexity within a college or school. A chair-elect may bring in a compensation specialist from People and Culture to assist them in achieving an equitable stipend and workload.

5.6.2 In addition to merit increases and university-wide salary adjustments, the chair's base faculty salary and stipend increases shall be made in accordance with university compensation guidelines.



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5.6.3 The chair's course reassignment may be affected by the appointment of assistant chairs, academic coordinators, and other faculty-based positions that assume departmental duties.

5.6.4 The chair-elect may negotiate with the dean to receive either a course release or a stipend for spring semester to receive training from the dean and outgoing chair. The dean is responsible for funding a course release or stipend.

5.6.5 Upon completion of their term, the chair shall no longer receive any compensation or reduced teaching load associated with their previous department chair duties. The outgoing chair may request a negotiated reduced teaching workload for one semester from the dean, with approval from the Provost.

5.7 Training, Service, and Evaluation of Department Chairs

5.7.1 The University shall offer orientation and ongoing training to department chairs. This training is meant to assist chairs with assigned duties.

5.7.2 As needed, deans or associate deans shall arrange further training for their chairs to explain the internal operations of the school/college or academic unit and how the chairs should fulfill their responsibilities.

5.7.3 A department's RTP criteria shall address the unique circumstances of the chair's role in relation to promotion.

5.7.4 The chair's negotiated teaching load shall satisfy the teaching requirement for annual performance evaluations and rank advancement. A chair's scholarship/creative works expectation shall be negotiated with the dean and documented for the RTP committee. Service as chair shall satisfy all levels of service requirements in department RTP criteria.

5.7.5 The dean shall conduct the annual evaluation of the chair in accordance with UVU Policy 633 *Faculty Performance Evaluation and Feedback*.

5.8 Discontinuance or Resignation of Department Chairs

5.8.1 If a department chair chooses to resign, they shall notify the dean in writing and, in most cases, shall continue to serve until a new or interim chair is elected. If the department chair is unable to serve until a new or interim chair is elected, the dean shall appoint an acting chair until faculty elect an interim chair. Election for a new or interim chair must occur as soon as possible.

5.8.2 Discontinuance of a department chair may be initiated by two-thirds majority of eligible voters.

5.8.3 Recommendations from the faculty to discontinue the chair should be rare and must be accompanied by a written, detailed letter of explanation from the department faculty and



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presented to the dean by a representative(s) of the department faculty. This letter of explanation shall outline how the chair is not satisfactorily performing their duties.

5.8.3.1 Upon receipt of the letter from the faculty, the dean shall investigate the claims made in the letter. At the dean's discretion, the dean will then determine whether the chair should be discontinued.

5.8.4 A dean may discontinue a department chair at the dean's discretion in consultation with the provost. Such discontinuance should be rare; the dean must provide a written explanation for their decision to the voting faculty to the extent that it is transparent, practicable, and legally appropriate.

5.8.5 Per UVU policies, no department chair shall be discontinued based on a complaint that is arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, or false.

5.8.6 Discontinuance or resignation from the position of department chair does not affect the chair's tenure or rank status. The job performance of the department chair may affect rank advancement.

5.8.7 When the chair is discontinued, an election for a new or interim chair shall be held as soon as possible.

5.8.8 The discontinued chair may not run for chair again for three years.

5.9 Selection of Assistant Chairs

5.9.1 At the request of a department chair, a dean may authorize a department to have an assistant chair(s), where appropriate, to assist with department and program responsibilities based on departmental complexity or other extenuating circumstances.

5.9.2 With the dean's approval, the department selects potential candidates for assistant chairs. All candidates must be in good standing.

5.9.3 Candidates must be ratified by eligible voters. If a majority of the eligible voters do not ratify the assistant chair, then the chair must make another selection.

5.10 Selection of Academic Coordinators

5.10.1 At the request of a department chair, a dean may authorize a department to have an academic coordinator(s), where appropriate, to assist with department and program responsibilities based on department complexity or other extenuating circumstances.



5.10.2 With the dean's approval, the faculty selects academic coordinator(s). The selection must be ratified by the department chair. All candidates must be in good standing.

5.10.3 If a majority of the eligible voters do not ratify the academic coordinator appointment, then the chair must make another selection.

5.11 Term of Service of Assistant Chairs

5.11.1 Assistant chairs serve at the pleasure of the chair. Chairs and deans shall collaborate to determine the duties and compensation of assistant chairs according to department complexity and need. The assistant chairs' term ends when the department chair's term ends or when the assistant chair is discontinued by the department chair (see section 5.2.2).

5.11.2 The appointment of the assistant chair is a twelve-month appointment and includes administrative duties throughout the year, including summer, though summer duties may be light depending on the department needs. The assistant chair's nine-month faculty contract is not affected.

5.11.3 As a faculty member, an assistant chair has the option to teach during summer in accordance with department or college/school practice. An assistant chair shall be compensated for summer teaching in accordance with university and college/school practice.

5.11.4 As a faculty member, an assistant chair has the option to perform external contract work during summer in accordance with department or college/school practice (see UVU Policy 114 *Conflict of Interest and Commitment* and Policy 323 *Guidelines for Consulting*).

5.12 Compensation for Assistant Chairs

5.12.1 An assistant chair will be compensated commensurate with their duties and responsibilities. In consultation with the dean, the chair determines an assistant chair's compensation. Compensation may take the form of a stipend, a reduced teaching load, or a combination of stipend and course reduction as approved by the dean.

5.12.1.1 An assistant chair-elect may bring a compensation specialist from People and Culture to assist them in achieving an equitable stipend and workload.

5.12.2 In cases where an assistant chair's services are no longer needed prior to the end of the semester, the department chair may assign other duties that do not extend beyond the end of the semester.

5.13 Compensation for Academic Coordinators



5.13.1 With the dean's approval, a department shall give an academic coordinator a stipend based on the departmental complexity, a reduced teaching load, or a combination of stipend and course reduction as approved by the dean.

5.14 Training, Service, and Evaluation of Assistant Chairs and Academic Coordinators

5.14.1 The dean and/or the department chair will offer orientation and ongoing training to assistant chairs and academic coordinators, as needed.

5.14.2 Department RTP criteria shall address the unique circumstances of an assistant chair's or academic coordinator's service in relation to tenure, promotion, and annual reviews.

5.15 Discontinuance or Resignation of Assistant Chairs or Academic Coordinators

5.15.1 Discontinuance of an assistant chair or academic coordinator may be initiated by a two-thirds majority of eligible voters. Such recommendations should be rare and must be accompanied by a written, detailed letter of explanation from the department faculty and presented to the department chair by a representative(s) of the department faculty. This letter of explanation shall outline how the assistant chair or academic coordinator is not satisfactorily performing their duties.

5.15.1.1 Upon receipt of the letter from the faculty, the department chair shall investigate the claims made in the letter. The department chair will make a recommendation to the dean on whether the assistant chair or academic coordinator should be discontinued.

5.15.1.2 If the department chair's recommendation differs from the faculty's, the dean reviews the recommendation from the department chair and decides whether the assistant chair or academic coordinator should be discontinued. The dean's decision is final.

5.15.2 In consultation with the dean, the department chair may recommend an assistant chair's or academic coordinator's discontinuance. Such recommendations should be rare; the department chair must explain the reason for their decision in writing to the voting faculty to the extent that it is transparent, practicable, and legally appropriate. The eligible voters shall determine by a majority vote if they agree or disagree with the department chair's recommendation.

5.15.2.1 If the eligible voters agree with the department chair's recommendation, the department chair shall discontinue the assistant chair or academic coordinator.

5.15.2.2 If a department chair and eligible voters disagree after review, the dean shall have final decision-making authority.

5.15.3 The dean may recommend an assistant chair's or academic coordinator's discontinuance. Such discontinuance should be rare; the dean must provide a written, detailed letter of



explanation to the voting faculty and department chair to the extent that it is transparent, practicable, and legally appropriate.

5.15.4 Discontinuance from the position of assistant chair or academic coordinator itself does not affect tenure or rank status. The job performance of the assistant chair or academic coordinator may affect tenure or rank advancement.

5.15.5 If an assistant chair or academic coordinator resigns before their term of service ends, the department chair will consult with the dean to address the needs of the department.

POLICY HISTORY		
Date of Last Formal Review: January 30, 2025		
Due Date of Next Review: January 30, 2030		
Date of Last Action	Action Taken	Authorizing Entity
February 12, 2009	Policy approved.	UVU Board of Trustees
January 30, 2025	Revised policy approved through regular process.	UVU Board of Trustees
June 5, 2026	Non-substantive change: “associate chair” changed to “assistant chair” throughout the policy.	Office of General Counsel

*More information on the formal review can be found in Policy 101 section 4.7.3.