



**THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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Professional Practice Faculty Proposal

October 2022

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## **I. Executive Summary**

This document proposes the addition of a Professional Practice Faculty track to the University Libraries tenure initiating unit. The University Libraries proposes that professional practice faculty can be appointed at the Professional Practice Assistant Professor, Professional Practice Associate Professor, or Professional Practice Professor level. Professional Practice faculty members will be appointed for an initial term of five years on a probationary basis, and then can be reappointed for additional periods of three to five years (Assistant or Associate Professor) or three to eight years (Professor). The percentage of professional practice faculty for the University Libraries will not exceed 20% of total faculty members within the tenure initiating unit (TIU).

There are four guiding rationales for establishing a Professional Practice Faculty track in University Libraries:

1. Resolves the issue of librarian roles performing similar functions operating in different classification schemes – some in academic titles, some in staff titles. Both the Office and Academic Affairs and university Human Resources are supportive of moving librarian roles that support similar instructional/librarianship functions to academic titles appropriate to their job functions. Not all roles currently operating with staff librarian titles would be in scope for professional practice faculty titles because their job functions do not align appropriately.
2. Positions Ohio State among its peers, many of which rely on similar clinical/practice faculty roles to support teaching, learning, and research.
3. Creates an additional faculty category that enhances the ability of University Libraries, the Health Sciences Library, the Law Library, and libraries on the regional campuses to connect the research, instructional, and service support they perform with students, faculty, and external stakeholders.
4. Solves a potential issue created by the Career Roadmap project, by which many professional librarians in staff roles would be reclassified into titles detrimental to recruitment and retention.

## **II. Background Information**

### **A. University Libraries – Mission and Organizational Structure**

University Libraries (“Libraries”) seeks as its mission to promote innovative research and creative expression, advance effective teaching, curate and preserve information essential for scholarship and learning at Ohio State, and share knowledge and culture with the people of Ohio, the nation, and the world. The Libraries provides information resources and professional expertise to support the evolving educational, research, and outreach and engagement missions of the university and its faculty, students, and staff. The Libraries – through the work of its faculty – actively advances knowledge creation in library and

information science and archival and curatorial practice through innovative research and original exhibitions, often advancing new models for professional practice for other research libraries and academic librarians.

Librarianship is an interdisciplinary field of research, teaching, and practice that draws broadly from a variety of fields of scholarship and application including managerial studies; computer science; information technology; various social science disciplines including education, sociology, anthropology, law, and history, among others; assessment and evaluation; materials science; and an array of areas of practice including metadata and description; teaching and learning; digital scholarship; publishing; copyright and intellectual property; preservation; area studies; digital libraries; archives; and curatorial studies. Core scholarship in the field examines how material, organizational, societal, and descriptive factors impact modes of knowledge transfer for individuals and groups.

As a field of practice, research librarianship provides researchers and students with the scholarly and cultural heritage information necessary for effective knowledge creation and learning. Academic research librarians support research, teaching, and learning across all academic disciplines by collecting, preserving, describing, and making discoverable and accessible primary and scholarly documentation across time and by teaching the knowledge practices and dispositions required to make best use of information.

The organizational structure of the Libraries reflects the multifaceted, interdisciplinary nature of the field of librarianship and its dual roles as a tenure initiating unit (TIU) and an academic support unit charged with sustaining research, teaching, and learning across the university. As such, the Libraries has no academic departments and is organized as a single-level TIU with divisions aligned with areas of professional practice, including research and education, content and access, distinctive collections and area studies, and digital technologies and programs. The Libraries offers a small number of credit-bearing courses through the College of Arts & Sciences; and Libraries faculty often teach in other academic departments, both as co-instructors and as instructors of record.

The University Libraries TIU differs from many others at Ohio State in that it incorporates faculty from several separate university administrative units, including University Libraries, the Health Sciences Library, and the libraries at the regional campuses. Per the *University Libraries Pattern of Administration*, tenure-track faculty librarians balance a significant teaching/librarianship load (~80% of appointment) with a rigorous research requirement (~20% of appointment). Promotion and tenure for tenure-track faculty librarians is driven by the demonstration of sustained excellence in librarianship/teaching, research, and professional service.

## B. Comparative Data

Many peer institutions rely on professional practice faculty, or local equivalents, in the delivery of their research and instructional support programs. Within the Big Ten

Academic Alliance, Maryland, Nebraska, Penn State, and Rutgers utilize a professional practice faculty track, in addition to tenure-track faculty roles. Iowa and Purdue are pursuing the establishment of professional practice faculty roles. For comparison purposes, Penn State reports 122 faculty librarians (98 tenure track, 24 professional practice equivalent); and Nebraska reports 31 faculty librarians (25 tenure track, six professional practice equivalent).

### C. Proposal History

In 2020, the University Libraries faculty was approached by the Moritz College of Law to discuss the potential negative implications on recruitment and retention for staff librarians across campus as a consequence of the Career Roadmap project. After conversations between the University Libraries, the Moritz College of Law, representatives from the regional campuses, the Office of Academic Affairs, and university Human Resources, the decision was made to pursue a proposal to add a Professional Practice Faculty track to the University Libraries tenure initiating unit, with the goals of moving staff librarian roles across the university to professional practice faculty roles where appropriate and correcting the longtime incongruence of similar roles being mapped to faculty and staff titles. The decision to move forward with the proposal was made in consultation with and with the support of both the University Libraries Faculty Advisory Committee and Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure Committee.

This proposal is the result of a continuing commitment to incorporate a Professional Practice Faculty track among the University Libraries faculty roles. On January 28, 2022, the faculty of the University Libraries voted in favor of moving the proposal forward to the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA). On October 27, 2022, the faculty of the University Libraries voted in favor of moving an amended proposal (this document) forward, following feedback from CAA.

### **III. Rationale for the Establishment of a Professional Practice Faculty Track**

There are four guiding rationales for establishing a Professional Practice Faculty track in University Libraries:

1. Resolves the issue of librarian roles performing similar functions operating in different classification schemes – some in academic titles, some in staff titles. Both the Office and Academic Affairs and university Human Resources are supportive of moving librarian roles that support similar instructional/librarianship functions to academic titles appropriate to their job functions. Not all roles currently operating with staff librarian titles would be in scope for professional practice faculty titles because their job functions do not align appropriately.
2. Positions Ohio State among its peers, many of which rely on similar clinical/practice faculty roles to support teaching, learning, and research.

3. Creates an additional faculty category that enhances the ability of University Libraries, the Health Sciences Library, the Law Library, and libraries on the regional campuses to connect the research, instructional, and service support they perform with students, faculty, and external stakeholders.
5. Solves a potential issue created by the Career Roadmap project, by which many professional librarians in staff roles would be reclassified into titles detrimental to recruitment and retention.

#### **IV. Terms and Conditions of Appointments**

##### **A. Type and Term of Appointment**

The percentage of professional practice faculty for the University Libraries will not exceed 20% of the tenure-track, practice, and research faculty in the TIU, per University Rule 3335-7-03.

Professional Practice faculty can be appointed at the Assistant, Associate, or Professor level. As specified by Faculty Rule 3335-7-05, Associate Professional Practice Professors or Professional Practice Professors will require the approval of the Office of Academic Affairs. Professional Practice Faculty appointments are fixed term contract appointments that do not entail tenure.

Professional Practice faculty members will normally be appointed for five years on a probationary basis, as specified by University Rule 3335-7-07, and will at the end of each year of the probationary period be notified as to whether they will be reappointed for the following year. University Libraries is requesting an exception to the above rule for current professional librarians in staff roles who would transition to professional practice faculty roles and have been employed by the university for five or more years. The probationary period for this transitional group of professional practice faculty will be waived, and they will be appointed as regular (non-probationary) professional practice faculty. University Libraries is also requesting an exception to the above rule for current professional librarians in staff roles who would transition to professional practice faculty roles and have been employed by the university for less than five years. This transitional group of professional practice faculty would have their probationary periods reduced by the number of years served.

By the end of the second-to-last year of the contract, the professional practice faculty member shall be notified whether a new contract will be offered. In the event that a new contract is not extended, the final year of the probationary contract is the terminal year of employment. There is no presumption that a new contract will be extended. In addition, the terms of a contract may be renegotiated at the time of reappointment.

After the completion of the probationary five-year contract, the professional practice faculty member may be reappointed for additional periods of three to five years (Assistant or Associate Professor) or three to eight years (Professor), at the

discretion of the Dean. These extended appointments are not probationary, and the individual may only be terminated for cause (see rule 3335-5-04 of the Administrative Code) or financial exigency (see rule 3335-5-02.1 of the Administrative Code).

B. Criteria for Appointment, Reappointment and Non-Reappointment, and Promotion of Professional Practice Faculty

Per rule 3335-7-06, procedures for appointment of professional practice faculty shall be established by University Libraries and shall be set forth in that unit's appointments, promotion, and tenure document. Appointments at the rank of Professional Practice Associate Professor or Professional Practice Professor require prior approval of the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA).

The presumption is that all faculty searches entail a national search in addition to the internal posting. Upon request, OAA will consider waiving the requirement for a national search for regular professional practice faculty, but the University Libraries must demonstrate why doing so is in the best interests of the unit and university. OAA and University Libraries approvals are required to waive a national search for a Professional Practice Faculty position.

Professional Practice faculty may hold a variety of graduate degrees, but minimally would be expected to hold a Master's degree or appropriate professional credentials demonstrating expertise and experience in their relevant area of study.

Professional Practice faculty serve under fixed term contracts and are not eligible for tenure. The titles of professional practice faculty in the University Libraries include Professional Practice Assistant Professor, Professional Practice Associate Professor, and Professional Practice Professor. Individuals hired as regular professional practice faculty are primarily focused on librarianship (teaching) and service/professional activities. The criteria for appointment of professional practice faculty are similar to those for tenure-track faculty (University Rule 3335-7-05) but will emphasize service and librarianship (teaching). In general, candidates should be held to a very high standard of excellence in the areas central to their responsibilities. Core responsibilities for practice faculty in University Libraries will include librarianship (teaching) and service at the Assistant, Associate, and Professor levels of appointment.

*Professional Practice Assistant Professor*

A Master's degree and/or appropriate professional credentials demonstrating relevant expertise in the field of study and appropriate workplace experience for the role are minimum requirements for the rank of Professional Practice Assistant Professor. Evidence of potential for high-quality librarianship and high-quality service to the profession is highly desirable. Appointment to the rank of Professional Practice Assistant Professor is for an initial term of five years. At the end of each year, a review of the contract must take place and a decision made on reappointment. At the end of the second-to-last year, a review will take place and a decision made on another term.

Criteria for appointment as a Professional Practice Assistant Professor:

- A Master's degree and/or other appropriate professional credentials demonstrating expertise in library or information science and/or the relevant librarianship sub-specialty
- Evidence of professional experience appropriate to the teaching and service role expected within the unit of hire
- Evidence of current knowledge of research impacting practice within library or information science and/or the relevant librarianship sub-specialty

*Professional Practice Associate Professor*

The awarding of the rank of Professional Practice Associate Professor must be based on convincing evidence that the professional practice faculty member has achieved excellence as a librarian and as one who provides effective service and can be expected to continue a program of high-quality librarianship and service relevant to the mission of University Libraries and to the university.

Criteria for appointment as, or promotion to, a Professional Practice Associate Professor:

- All criteria as noted above for Professional Practice Assistant Professor
- Minimum five years professional experience appropriate to the teaching and service role expected within the unit of hire
- Evidence of ongoing engagement with practitioners in relevant context
- Evidence of sustained high-quality librarianship
- Evidence of high-quality and impactful service both within and outside of the university

*Professional Practice Professor*

The awarding of the rank of Professional Practice Professor must be based on convincing evidence that the professional practice faculty member has a sustained record of excellence in librarianship and has demonstrated leadership in service at the local, state, or national level.

Criteria for appointment as, or promotion to, a Professional Practice Professor:

- All criteria as noted above for Professional Practice Associate Professor
- Minimum eight years professional experience appropriate to the teaching and service role expected within the unit of hire
- Current professional credentials demonstrating expertise in the field of study
- Evidence of advanced knowledge of research impacting practice with the field of study
- Evidence of ongoing engagement with practitioners in relevant context
- Evidence of sustained high-quality librarianship



- Evidence of high-quality and impactful service both within and outside of the university
- Evidence of high-quality and impactful service at a local, state, or national level

## V. **Activities and Responsibilities of Professional Practice Track Faculty**

Activities and responsibilities of professional practice track faculty include three primary areas: the practice of librarianship, advising and service in the unit, and voting privileges in unit governance. These three areas will be discussed separately.

### A. Practice of Librarianship

The primary responsibilities of professional practice faculty are expected to be in the area of librarianship; their librarianship responsibilities would be a minimum of 90% of their overall workload.

Librarianship is the performance of the faculty member's role in support of Libraries and university research and instructional missions. Librarianship takes many forms; the *Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Criteria for The University Libraries* document (2019) defines it as carrying out one's "appointed position, which may include, but not be limited to, the following [p. 15-16]:

- Analyzing curricular and research needs of the candidate's assigned areas and matching scholarly and information resources to those needs.
- Sustaining and enhancing/expanding comprehensive knowledge of information resources in the areas of the candidate's expertise, as well as an awareness of the general contours of the information landscape.
- Developing and applying knowledge of use of collections to effectively manage resources and increase the value of collections for faculty's and students' research, teaching, and learning.
- Leveraging knowledge of publishing trends, open access publishing and other publication models, and of scholarly communication in order to support faculty and student scholarship.
- Supporting content discovery through resource description and the appropriate deployment of technologies in order to sustain access to resources.
- Managing, organizing and evaluating data and information to align with user behavior.
- Supporting scholarship at various stages of its creation and dissemination.
- Creativity in advancing the Libraries' mission through program leadership.
- Creativity in the development of instructional materials and effective pedagogies for a variety of teaching situations.
- Designing and redesigning courses and curriculum and supporting faculty in redesigning courses and curriculum using current instructional design practices and Libraries resources.

- Providing expert assistance with and interpretation of policies regarding intellectual property; advising faculty and students on strategies for effectively managing and exercising their rights in their work.
- Building and integrating complex information technology systems and structures to promote faculty and student use of Libraries resources and expertise.
- Serving in an ex officio capacity on committees, task forces, working groups etc. within the scope of one's position.”

#### B. Course and Curriculum Development and Delivery

Teaching and developing courses will be a common librarianship duty of professional practice faculty, though not all roles will include these duties. Courses taught by professional practice faculty are anticipated to be practice or skills-based, where the theory of information science and other disciplines are applied to simulation of real-world tasks that students may encounter in their post-graduation careers. Professional Practice faculty may be involved in graduate, professional, or undergraduate courses as well as research, information literacy, and other training sessions. Professional Practice faculty may also work with instructors from across the university to develop courses and curricula.

#### C. Advising and Service in the Unit

A secondary area of responsibility for professional practice faculty is service to the TIU, campus, and/or university. The nature of this service will vary by the individual. In some cases, it is anticipated that a professional practice faculty member might supervise undergraduate or professional student independent research or student interns. Professional Practice faculty may serve as student advisors, while in other cases they might be recommended to apply for Graduate Faculty status in the Graduate School. As stated in section 12.1. of the Graduate School Handbook, regular clinical faculty are eligible for appointment as Category M graduate faculty. The qualifications and rights and responsibilities of Category M graduate faculty, as noted in Section 12.4 of the Graduate School Handbook, are as follows:

*Minimum Category M Qualifications.* The faculty member

- holds a regular, tenure-track, or regular clinical faculty appointment
- holds a master's degree or higher, or equivalent

*Rights and Responsibilities of Graduate Faculty.* The faculty member

- acts as the advisor for master's students
- participates in the governance of graduate education at all levels within the university
- serves on doctoral examination committees at the discretion of the graduate studies committee.

Approval to advise and supervise graduate students must be obtained from the graduate school as set forth in rule 3335-5-29 and detailed in the Graduate School Handbook.

#### D. Role in Unit Governance

As indicated by rule 3335-7-11, professional practice faculty are ineligible to serve on the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Committee, and would not have a vote on appointments of or promotion and tenure for tenure-track faculty. Professional Practice faculty may be permitted to participate in other faculty governance including serving on governance committees and voting on all other matters, including appointment of additional professional practice faculty, and where appropriate, on the promotion and retention of professional practice faculty. Professional Practice faculty may be appointed to other TIU-level committees as appropriate and be elected to serve as university senator representing the University Libraries TIU. Decisions on participation in faculty governance activities for professional practice faculty, such as those listed above, would be determined by subsequent vote by the eligible faculty, should this proposal be approved.

### VI. **Differentiation of Responsibilities of Professional Practice Track Faculty**

Professional Practice faculty will primarily perform librarianship as defined by the *Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Criteria for The University Libraries* document (2019) excerpted above in Section V. Librarianship responsibilities would be a minimum of 90% of their overall workload. There will be no requirement that professional practice faculty perform and communicate research through publications, exhibitions, etc. in order to achieve Assistant, Associate, or Professor status, as is required for tenure-track faculty. Finally, as specified above, professional practice faculty members would not have a voice or vote on appointments, promotions, tenure, or investigations of tenure-track faculty.

### VII. **Oversight and Evaluation**

#### A. Annual Evaluations

Annual evaluations of professional practice faculty will be performed by the supervisor, including input from the faculty. These evaluations will take place at the same time as those for tenure-track faculty. The evaluation will be communicated in writing to the professional practice faculty member, together with an invitation to discuss the evaluation in person if the professional practice faculty member desires. Required documentation will be described in the *Appointment, Promotion and Tenure Criteria for The University Libraries* document.

Professional Practice faculty at the Health Sciences Library, the Law Library, and on regional campuses (local administrative units) will be reviewed annually by the appropriate local administrator and University Libraries Associate Dean. The local review focuses mainly on librarianship and local service. The report of the local administrative review will be forwarded to the Dean of University Libraries for the personnel file. The Associate Dean who is the liaison to local administrative units will write an annual review of the overall service and scholarship (if relevant) of the

professional practice faculty member. A copy will be shared with the faculty member, the Dean of University Libraries, and the local administrator. In the event of divergence in performance assessment between the local administrative unit and the University Libraries, the Dean of University Libraries will discuss the matter with the local administrator in an effort to clarify and reconcile the divergence, so that the faculty member receives consistent assessment and advice.

#### B. Reappointment / Nonreappointment and Promotion

Annual reappointment of a probationary professional practice faculty member requires the approval of the Dean of University Libraries, who makes the final decision. When the TIU and administrative homes are different, the Dean will work in consultation with the appropriate local administrator on reappointment decisions.

Reappointment for regular (non-probationary) professional practice faculty will be decided by the Dean of University Libraries or their designee at the contract interval. When the TIU and administrative homes are different, the Dean will work in consultation with the appropriate local administrator on reappointment decisions.

By the end of the penultimate year of each contract period, the professional practice faculty member will be informed as to whether a new contract will be extended at the conclusion of the current contract period. If a new contract is not extended, the final year of the current contract is a terminal year of employment. There is no presumption that a new contract will be extended.

A recommendation not to renew a probationary regular professional practice faculty member's annual contract requires the approval of the Dean of University Libraries.

Promotion recommendations must be reviewed by the executive vice president and provost, whose decision shall be final.

#### C. Criteria for Evaluation

Evaluation of professional practice faculty shall be based on the quality of performance in 1) librarianship; and 2) advising and service to the unit, university, and/or community; and 3) knowledge of research impacting practice with the field of study or practice.

Contract renewal of a regular professional practice faculty member requires a review and recommendation from the University Libraries Appointment Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the approval of the Dean of University Libraries, who makes the final decision. The Dean has the authority to terminate a professional practice faculty member's contract before the end of the appointment. In instances when the TIU and administrative homes are different, the Dean will work in consultation with the appropriate local administrator on any decision to terminate a professional practice faculty contract before the end of an appointment. Before terminating a professional practice faculty contract before the end of the appointment, the Dean must consult with the University Libraries Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure committee.

#### D. Periodic Review of the Professional Practice Faculty Track

At five-year intervals, University Libraries will evaluate the impact, both positive and negative, of the professional practice faculty track. Both quantitative data (percentages of professional practice and tenure-track faculty in the TIU) and qualitative data (surveys, focus groups, etc.) regarding the perceived benefits and costs of having professional practice faculty will be obtained. Input will be sought from administrators, faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students, and community stakeholders, as appropriate. If the input from such an evaluation suggests an overall negative impact, the University Libraries may choose not to make further professional practice faculty appointments. Also, per the Ohio State University Academic Organization and Curriculum Handbook, reports will be submitted to CAA annually.

#### E. Transfer to Faculty of Practice Role

Per Faculty Rule, 3335-7-09, a college, school, or department may provide for the possibility of transfers from the tenure-track faculty to the regular professional practice faculty track if appropriate to its circumstances. University Libraries may permit a tenure-track faculty member to transfer to a professional practice faculty position with a 2/3 vote from all tenure-track faculty in the University Libraries. Transfers must abide by the following:

- (1) The request for transfer must be initiated by the faculty member in writing and must state clearly how the individual's career goals and activities have changed;
- (2) When a tenured faculty member transfers to the regular professional practice faculty track, tenure is lost; and
- (3) All transfers must be approved by the Dean and the executive vice president and provost.

Per Faculty Rule 3335-7-10, transfers from the professional practice track faculty track to the tenure-track are not permitted. Professional Practice track faculty may apply for tenure-track positions and compete in regular national searches for such positions.

### **VIII. Resource Availability and Impact**

Financial resources to fund Professional Practice faculty hires will come from general and development funds.

The overwhelming majority of prospective Professional Practice faculty appointments will be extant staff librarian roles transitioned within the Health Sciences Library, the Law Library, University Libraries, and libraries on the regional campuses. These positions are funded from general funds allocated to these administrative units.

Any future Professional Practice faculty within the University Libraries TIU will be funded through general funds and development funds raised to support such positions by the administrative units proposing the positions. It should be noted that there is no intention of expanding the percentage of Professional Practice faculty appointments within the TIU in the future.