

Guidelines for Joint Academic Appointments at the University of Michigan

Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
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I. Introduction

One of the University of Michigan’s great strengths is its formal commitment to help faculty move across disciplinary boundaries to undertake innovative intellectual, scientific, and artistic endeavors and to create new knowledge. When a faculty member’s sense of academic “home” crosses disciplinary boundaries, he or she may establish and maintain two or more academic bases. The schools or colleges in which the faculty member holds appointments have a responsibility to help the faculty member to achieve this goal. In the past, faculty members with joint appointments have sometimes encountered quite different administrative processes for faculty appointments in their different academic homes. When the schools or colleges that share a faculty member have not worked smoothly together, the faculty member or the academic units involved have encountered confusion, frustration, delay, or conflict.

This document provides a set of principles and guidelines to help the schools and colleges and the Provost’s Office to make processes related to joint faculty appointments as clear and direct as those for faculty with appointments in a single school or college. We are focused on the need to appoint, review, promote, retain, and, in some cases, terminate any tenure-track or tenured faculty member who holds a joint academic appointment. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist deans, directors, and department chairs in helping faculty members who hold joint appointments to succeed and thrive at the University of Michigan.

For the purposes of this document, a faculty member holds a *joint academic appointment* if he or she holds two or more regular instructional, research, or clinical instructional appointments, including appointments of 0% effort (sometimes called “dry” appointments). The principles in the policy primarily address joint academic appointments that a faculty member holds in two or more schools or colleges or other

academic units (e.g., research centers). Note that some of the principles apply equally to the situation where a faculty member has a joint appointment in two (or more) departments within a single school or college. However, our main focus is on appointments that cross two (or more) schools or colleges.

II. Principles

A faculty member who holds a joint appointment is more likely to thrive and succeed in his or her academic career if his or her schools and colleges observe the principles below in carrying out their responsibilities to the faculty member.

1. **At the beginning of the joint appointment, the deans' offices and department chairs (if applicable) of the two (or more) schools or colleges should clarify and agree on how they will engage in key procedures related to the faculty member's academic career.**

Together, the appointing schools or colleges should agree on the procedures they will use to appoint, evaluate, promote, resolve disputes, or change employment conditions for jointly appointed faculty.

2. **Whenever possible, the deans' offices should agree on a single joint process for making promotion and tenure decisions about the jointly appointed faculty member.**

A unified process for evaluation for promotion and tenure is the clearest and simplest way to ensure that both schools and colleges are represented in the promotion process while reducing the faculty member's sense of double jeopardy from duplicate processes. When it is not possible for the schools and colleges to agree on a single process, the deans' offices should discuss the timing and key elements of the promotion processes in each academic unit so that the overall process can be streamlined, synchronized, and shortened. It is critical for each school or college to know what the other is doing and for the candidate or faculty member to know what each school or college is doing.

3. **One of the schools or colleges should agree to serve as the "administrative home."**

Although each school or college must maintain strong links to the jointly appointed faculty member, one of the involved schools and colleges should be designated as the *administrative home*. The *administrative home* will take the lead responsibility on personnel issues, central human resources reporting, appointment, promotions, and coordination of annual performance review, conflict resolution, and changes in employment. Often, but not always, the *administrative home* will be the school with the higher appointment fraction. Everyone involved should know which school or college is serving as the *administrative home*.

Simultaneously, each department, academic program, or school/college in which a faculty member holds a joint academic appointment must share responsibility for communicating effectively and, where necessary, solving problems with the other academic unit(s) in which the faculty member also holds an appointment.

- 4. Each school or college should take deliberate steps to help the jointly appointed faculty member become integrated into the community.**

Each school or college should provide the faculty member with opportunities to participate broadly in the life of the academic community. Ideally, the faculty member will have a substantive role in the scholarly activities and organizational responsibilities of each department, school, or college where he or she has an appointment. It is especially important for the relevant schools or colleges to make special efforts on this front when the majority of a faculty member's time is in a research institute but he or she holds tenure elsewhere.

- 5. A jointly appointed faculty member's overall effort and access to resources should be comparable, in total, to faculty who hold appointments in only one school or college.**

The schools and colleges that share faculty members should work together to ensure that faculty members who hold joint appointments are not excessively burdened and have access to resources that are comparable to those available to faculty with single appointments. Such resources may include mentoring, space, equipment, funding, and access to graduate students.

- 6. The evaluation procedures of the schools and colleges should acknowledge the faculty member's multiple academic commitments and should take his or her interdisciplinary work into account.**

Evaluation procedures that work well for faculty within a single school or college may need to be modified for faculty members who have joint appointments. In particular, schools and colleges often need to make special efforts to evaluate the interdisciplinary work often done by faculty members with joint appointments with a different perspective than that of single disciplines. Both schools and colleges should make sure the faculty member understands the evaluation criteria that will be applied to his or her work.

- 7. The faculty member who holds a joint appointment must play an active role in helping the schools and colleges to collaborate effectively.**

The faculty member should make the effort to become familiar with each school's or college's expectations and procedures. If these procedures conflict, the faculty member should speak up in a timely way. The faculty member often has information that the department chairs or deans' offices do not; the faculty

member should inform the relevant administrators of issues that arise as a result of the joint appointment.

8. **When the faculty member runs into problems with the joint appointment, the deans' offices of the relevant schools or colleges should work together to address them.**
9. **The University supports dry (0% effort) faculty appointments with an expectation that such appointments convey rights and responsibilities within the school or college making the appointment.**

At the time of making an appointment with 0% effort, the relevant Dean's office should clarify expectations about the faculty member's rights and responsibilities to the school/college, and should inform the school or college where the faculty member has his or her primary appointment.

III. Recommended Practices for Joint Faculty Appointments

1. Recruiting and Initial Appointment

A faculty member may acquire a joint appointment in a variety of ways:

- When two or more units create a joint appointment, advertise the position, and jointly hire a faculty candidate;
- When two or more units create a joint appointment for a specific prospective faculty member;
- When a unit that is recruiting a prospective faculty member learns during the recruitment process that the faculty member also wants to hold an appointment in another department or school/college; or
- When a faculty member who already holds a regular instructional or clinical instructional appointment wants to add an appointment in another school or college.

In any of these scenarios, the two deans' offices should create a general plan for the joint appointment at the time of appointment. This plan should be specifically outlined in a *formal, written memorandum of understanding* that reflects the agreement between schools and colleges regarding the circumstances of individual faculty members. (In the case of a new appointment, the memorandum of understanding may be appended to the offer letter, or may follow the faculty member's acceptance of the offer.) The memorandum of understanding should include:

- a. Tenure line(s). Specify where the faculty member may hold tenure and at what fraction.
- b. Workload. Discuss expectations with regard to the faculty member's teaching, service, etc. The overall demands on the faculty member should be reasonable (including the faculty member's number of advisees, both formal and informal) and appropriately balanced in terms of the fractional appointments. The teaching assignments should be coordinated, and possibilities for cross-listed courses should be discussed. Service expectations should be clearly delineated and coordinated.
- c. Criteria for evaluation. To the extent possible, all departments, schools, or colleges participating in the appointment should define the standards and criteria that each of them will use to assess the quality of the faculty member's scholarship or creative activity and teaching. These standards and criteria should take into account the unique features of interdisciplinary collaborative activity and the differences between or among the units where the faculty member holds appointments.
- d. Access to resources. Discuss and agree on the faculty member's access to resources in each school or college (e.g., office space; administrative support; funding, such as research seed money; mentoring; and graduate student support). All of the units in which the faculty member holds an appointment should provide funds to the faculty member in accord with departmental, school, or college practices, in a way that is proportional to the faculty member's percentage of appointment.
- e. Allocation of research revenues. The involved centers, departments, schools, and colleges should agree in advance about how they will handle revenues the faculty member generates through his or her research, where applicable. This agreement should be described in the memorandum of understanding.
- f. Mentoring. If the appointment is for an untenured faculty member, each school or college should identify a mentor or advisor for the jointly appointed faculty member who is familiar with his or her interdisciplinary work. At least once a year, the joint mentors or advisors should discuss the performance and progress of the jointly appointed faculty member and meet together with the faculty member to offer feedback and advice about his or her performance and progress.
- g. Designation of the administrative home. For administrative convenience, agree on which school or college will have responsibility for coordinating efforts among the academic units (even in the instance of equally divided effort) and include explicit reference to this in the memorandum of understanding. The administrative home will take responsibility for providing notification of reviews to the other school or college and the

faculty member, preparing written memoranda of understanding for distribution to all parties, and providing opportunities for review and renegotiation of agreements and plans. This designation does not alter the responsibility of each school or college for good communication with the faculty member or for responsive problem solving.

- h. Timing and conduct of reviews. At the time of the appointment and in consultation with the faculty member, the deans' offices should produce a written plan for conducting reviews (annual and promotional). The plan should be streamlined as much as possible and include information about timing and any differences between the schools' or colleges' review procedures. If the units will conduct separate reviews, the department chairs or other relevant administrators should agree how they will communicate effectively throughout the review process.

In the case of a new assistant professor, the initial memorandum of understanding may defer, until the third year, making a specific plan for coordinating the tenure review. See Section III.3.b. *Coordinating reviews.*

Also see *Appendix A: Checklist for a Memorandum of Understanding For a Joint Academic Appointment.*

2. Changes in Appointment

Faculty members who hold joint appointments may wish to change them over the course of their academic careers at the University. Schools and colleges also may wish to change the terms of their arrangements with individual faculty members. These changes may arise because of new opportunities, changes in faculty interests and focus, or difficulties in the original joint appointment. For any of these reasons, it is important to *create procedures and opportunities for agreements to be reviewed and renegotiated.*

The following are recommended practices related to changes in joint appointments:

- a. Making changes in budgeted appointment. The two deans' offices should agree in advance, if possible, on the procedures by which the faculty member will be allowed to make a shift in a budgeted joint appointment. Before making a change in a budgeted appointment, a school or college should consult with other schools or colleges in which the faculty member holds an appointment.
- b. Discontinuing appointments. The deans' offices should clarify the terms under which the faculty member would be allowed to discontinue a joint academic appointment. If an annual or promotional review shows that a given faculty member's duties or connections to one of his or her academic appointments have become attenuated, or if the appointment has

become purely ceremonial, the school or college may wish to discontinue the appointment. If a school or college wishes to discontinue a joint faculty appointment, the dean's office or department chair should consult with the other units in which the faculty member holds an appointment.

- c. Faculty right of retreat. If the faculty member holds a 100% tenure commitment divided between two or more units, it is desirable *at the time of the appointment* for one of the units to give the faculty member the option of increasing his or her appointment to 100% in that unit. When it is not possible for either school or college to offer this option, the faculty member should be fully informed about what options are available.
- d. Conflict Resolution. The deans' offices should identify the steps the faculty member should follow if the faculty member experiences concerns about the terms of the joint academic appointment and/or the actions of the departments, schools, or colleges involved. In general, it is recommended that an individual faculty member's concerns be expressed at the level of the program or department, involving the school or college (presumably an associate dean) only if the department's efforts to resolve the difficulty prove to be unsatisfactory. If problems persist, the associate deans in the relevant schools/colleges should undertake to resolve them.

If a department, school, or college has concerns about a faculty member's performance or conduct, the administrator most knowledgeable about the concern should handle the difficulty. Each dean's office has a responsibility to notify the faculty member's other school or college of disciplinary action toward the jointly appointed faculty member.

3. Review Processes

- a. Streamlining process. Wherever feasible, the schools or colleges participating in the review of the faculty member should streamline the requirements of the faculty member. For example, one school or college may agree to accept the form the faculty member's other school or college uses in annual reviews.
- b. Coordinating reviews. It is highly desirable to coordinate review efforts in a deliberate way, annually and at each key point in the process of recruiting, hiring, reviewing, promoting, or terminating the faculty member. If agreement on tenure review was not specified at the time of the initial appointment, then the two deans' offices should develop a memorandum of understanding about the process for conducting the tenure review well in advance, ideally no later than the time of the third-year review.
- c. Conducting annual reviews. Each year, all schools and colleges should review each faculty member with a budgeted joint appointment with

regard to his or her research, teaching, and service. In the context of these annual reviews, the dean or department chair should provide feedback to the faculty member about fulfillment of the expectations, responsibilities, and procedures outlined in the appointment agreement. When appropriate, the dean or chair should discuss with the faculty member matters of overall workload and the possibility of shifting emphasis with regard to research, teaching, or service. Although faculty with dry (0% effort) appointments are not usually reviewed annually, it is useful for a school or college to conduct periodic reviews of junior faculty members who hold a dry joint appointment.

- d. Choosing reviewers. Schools and colleges should select reviewers for tenure and promotion carefully, with the goal of identifying scholars who are capable of looking beyond disciplinary “centers.” In non-traditional, innovative, and cross-disciplinary research, few people grasp or understand the whole picture of the faculty member’s academic agenda. Consequently, the jointly appointed faculty member may be more vulnerable to critique from colleagues across the disciplines in which he or she works. Scholars in a single discipline can be inclined to break down the work into discipline-specific components. Careful choice of reviewers can mitigate these risks.

Also see Appendix B: *Checklist for Reviewing Faculty Members Who Hold Joint Academic Appointments.*

IV. Special Circumstances

1. Untenured Faculty

The recommended practices detailed above apply to all faculty members who hold joint appointments. The practices described below will help schools and colleges to address a few key issues that can significantly affect faculty members with joint appointments who will eventually be eligible for tenure and promotion.

- a. At the beginning of the joint appointment, the two or more appointing schools or colleges should agree whether the faculty member will be able to request a shift in his or her appointments prior to the tenure and promotion review, and, if so, what procedures the faculty member should follow to request such a shift.
- b. In the case of a new assistant professor, the initial memorandum of understanding may defer until the third year making a specific plan for coordinating the tenure review.
- c. During the time leading up to a tenure decision, the appointing schools/colleges must work together to ensure that the faculty member is

not unnecessarily burdened with an excessive workload as a result of the joint appointment.

- d. At the time of tenure and promotion review, the appointing schools/colleges should select appropriate faculty members for the review committee, which will ideally include one or more faculty members who have done multidisciplinary research similar to that of the faculty member.
- e. At the time of tenure review, the appointing schools/colleges should work together to ensure that the review committee(s) will not unduly burden the faculty member. They should agree on a common set of materials, statements, and reviewers that both schools or colleges can share.

2. Dry Appointments

The University supports dry (0% effort) faculty appointments with an expectation that such appointments convey rights and responsibilities within the relevant schools/colleges making the appointment. Below is a list of recommended practices that apply specifically to dry faculty appointments:

- a. The faculty member and the relevant school or college should discuss and agree on what will be expected of the faculty member, and on what criteria the unit will use to assess his or her contributions.
- b. Any unit in which a faculty member holds a dry appointment should participate in some way in all stages of each review process for tenure or promotion. Although the level of participation may vary depending on the circumstances, some involvement by the unit in which the faculty member holds a dry appointment is strongly recommended.
- c. Well in advance of any promotion or tenure review of the faculty member, the school or college that serves as the administrative home should contact the school or college in which the faculty member holds a dry appointment to ensure that they can be represented in an adequate, timely, and consistent way in the review process.
- d. Any school or college in which a faculty member holds a dry appointment should have full access to all relevant review materials that other schools or colleges have collected, including external letters and reports from promotion committees.
- e. Dry appointments may be discontinued. A faculty member who wants to discontinue an appointment should notify his or her administrative home school or college before a decision is made. The dean's office of a school or college that wishes to discontinue a dry appointment should discuss its intention with the other schools or colleges in which the faculty member holds appointments before a decision is made.

3. Joint Appointments Across a Research Institute and a School or College

Holding an appointment in a research institute or center hinges on research productivity and other practical matters such as one's research being aligned with current research agendas and funding availability. Therefore, the nature of the commitment differs somewhat from the nature of the faculty member's appointment in a school or college. The good practices described below address such joint appointments:

- a. Arrangements for support of the faculty member should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The nature of these arrangements, including office space, office support, and graduate student research assistance will depend on the fraction of the faculty member's appointments and the faculty member's particular circumstances. These terms of support should be decided by the units in advance and may need to be renegotiated over time. The faculty member and all involved schools and colleges should be notified of these arrangements.
- b. Before a research institute and a school or college make a new joint faculty appointment, the offices of the dean/director should decide what tenure retreat rights the faculty member will have in the relevant school or college.
- c. If a faculty member with a joint appointment wants to change the amount of time allocated to each of the units in which he or she holds an appointment, the faculty member should discuss these plans with all the relevant units with which he or she is affiliated.

A working group developed these guidelines during the 2003-2004 academic year. The group included:
(The list cites the positions the contributors held at the time.)

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Appendix A

Checklist for a Memorandum of Understanding for a Joint Academic Appointment

University of Michigan

At the beginning of a joint appointment, the deans' offices and department chairs (if applicable) of the two (or more) schools or colleges should prepare a memorandum of understanding that clarifies how they will engage in key procedures related to the faculty member's appointment and academic career.

For new faculty appointments, the memorandum of understanding may be attached to the offer letter or sent separately. For a current faculty member who accepts an additional academic appointment, the two schools and colleges should prepare the memorandum of understanding at the time of the appointment.

The key issues that such a memorandum should address are listed below.

Rights and Responsibilities

- The key responsibilities of the administrative home
- In which academic unit(s) the tenure line will reside
- Which of the academic units (if any) will extend rights of retreat to the faculty member (if any unit)
- The faculty member's teaching and service responsibilities in each academic unit
- Which unit will serve as the faculty member's administrative home

Reviews

- By what criteria the candidate's performance will be assessed
- A brief description of the process and schedule the academic units will follow (jointly or separately) to review the faculty member's performance and progress
- How the units plan to coordinate promotion and tenure reviews

Changes in the Appointment

- Whom the faculty member should contact if he or she wants to renegotiate the terms of the joint appointment
- Whom the faculty member should contact if he or she wants to discontinue an appointment
- (*If the faculty candidate is an Assistant Professor*) What constraints will be in place, if any, for the faculty member to discontinue an academic appointment prior to any applicable tenure/promotion review

Other Terms/Logistics

- Which of the academic unit(s) will provide office space for the faculty member and whom the faculty member should contact for more information

- What rights the candidate has to access policies and resources of the units involved
- A process for the faculty member to seek resolution of joint appointment issues (in most cases, approach the associate deans)
- Allocation of research-related revenue

Appendix B

Checklist for Reviewing Faculty Members Who Hold Joint Academic Appointments

University of Michigan

Annual Reviews

- If possible, the two (or more) deans or department chairs should meet together with the faculty member to provide feedback.
- If a joint meeting is not possible, prior to meeting individually with the faculty member, the chairs/deans should discuss with each other their perceptions about the faculty member's progress.
- If a department chair or dean perceives performance issues, he or she should communicate the concerns to the other involved chair(s) or dean(s). In turn, all involved units should convey the concerns to the relevant associate deans so they can resolve any joint appointment-related issues.

Reappointment/Promotion/Tenure Reviews

If a candidate is up for reappointment or promotion/tenure in the administrative home unit, that unit should notify the other unit(s) in which the faculty member holds an appointment. This should be done before the start of the academic year in which the review will take place.

The units need to decide whether they will review the faculty member jointly, which is preferred, or in separate, parallel reviews.

Joint Review (preferred)

- Does the committee that will review the candidate's work include faculty from each unit?
- If the review processes that the school(s) or college(s) in which the faculty member holds appointments are significantly different from each other, which process(es) and time table(s) will be used?
- Has the full set of candidate materials been made available to all promotion/tenure committees and executive committees?

Separate Parallel Reviews

If the two units will each conduct its own tenure review, they need to minimize the burden the separate reviews place on the faculty member and also to plan for a way to reconcile the review results.

- Has the timing been coordinated between the multiple committees?

- Are external letter requests coordinated to avoid multiple requests to the same expert?
- Has it been decided a priori how the units will resolve conflicting outcomes?
- Have the associate deans in each school or college communicated with each other any feedback to be given the candidate to resolve any conflicts?
- Has the feedback been given to the candidate in an integrated format?

Sequential Reviews

If the units will conduct reviews during sequential academic years, they need to minimize the burden placed on the faculty member by separate reviews. The deans' offices also need to decide a priori on a plan to reconcile the review results.

- Will the school or college that reviews the faculty member first share their materials with the school or college that does its review second?
- What promotion materials need to be updated by the school or college that goes second? Will the school or college that reviews the faculty member second accept the letters from the first review? (When considering the promotion recommendations from the school or college that is reviewing the faculty member second, the Provost's Office *will* accept letters done in the preceding year.)