

AAAL Guidelines for NTTF Promotion/Advancement in the USA Context of Research I Institutions

Table of Content

Purpose of the document	p. 2
Ethical practices for the employment of non-tenure-track faculty	p. 3
Criteria – Teaching	p. 3
Classroom instruction	p. 3
Online teaching	p. 4
Development of instructional materials	p. 5
Criteria – Advising and Mentoring	p. 6
Criteria – Curricula work and Administration	p. 6
Criteria – Service	p. 7
International and national service	p. 7
University service	p. 7
Local (State-/Community-based) service	p. 7
Criteria – Professional Development	p. 8
Advancement in Rank	p. 8

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The purpose of this task force is to provide a companion/supplementary set of recommendations to the existing Tenure and Promotion (T&P) Guidelines for tenure-track faculty (TTF) in applied linguistics. This document addresses the case of the non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) in applied linguistics in the US. Similar to the T&P Guidelines for TTF, this document outlines a set of principles or guidelines about how teaching, service/administration, and research time (if/when applicable) should translate into reasonable workloads and promotion of NTTF. To this extent, this document is intended to address ethical practices for the employment of NTTF. The term non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) is used here as it is a widely understood term, but AAAL both recognizes and acknowledges that institutions of higher education may use a different terminology to refer to this group of professionals. While this document is aimed at a specific educational context, that of Research I institutions, other institutions of higher education that also employ NTTF and that are teaching intensive, may want to consider this document to enhance their own practices.

These guidelines have been conceived as advisory in nature and aim to address the following:

- 1) To suggest ethical practices for the employment of NTTF.
- 2) To offer a vision of what constitute quality teaching, service, and administration in applied linguistics with attention to maintaining continuous professional development relevant to the assignment.
- 3) To present a set of principles that can serve to ensure a proper process is in place to vet the advancement and promotion of NTTF in applied linguistics.

We also recognize the evolving nature of applied linguistics, which necessitates ongoing updates and modifications to stay relevant. Therefore, the wording of this document shall be reviewed by the AAAL Executive Committee and, if necessary, a specially constituted taskforce, every 5 years, will revisit the guidelines with the possibility of creating further recommendations as necessary. The next scheduled review shall take place in 2026.

AAAL NTTF P & A Guidelines Taskforce

Chair: Naoko Taguchi, Northern Arizona University

Members (in alphabetical order):

Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala, Colorado State University

Linda Harklau, University of Georgia

Stephen Looney, Pennsylvania State University

Ethical practices for the employment of non-tenure-track faculty

NTTF make up the vast majority of instructional faculty in universities in the US. Nonetheless, they are by in large contingently employed, inadequately compensated, and not provided with clearly defined criteria or support for the advancement of their careers. When this is the case, it is imperative that universities rectify these circumstances by offering NTTF multiyear contracts in full-time positions with clearly defined workloads and expectations. When this is not possible, universities should ensure that their NTTF understand why that is not possible, as a number of applied linguists may find themselves working in units that may not receive base-funding, which would challenge the ability of institutions of higher education to comply with the expectations stated above, such as the offer of multi-year contracts. Nevertheless, fair compensation and ethical practices in regard to workloads should be expected.

Additionally, universities must take steps to ensure that NTTF are properly compensated in relation to their workload and duties, and are given the opportunity to pursue continued professional development and advancement in rank. That is, NTTF should also be afforded opportunities for promotion whether on teaching or clinical tracks, and whether or not they possess doctoral degrees. For instance, NTTF with a doctoral degree could pursue a professorial path to promotion in rank, such as: Assistant Teaching Professor, Associate Teaching Professor, Teaching Professor, and include a peer review process. Those without doctoral degrees should also be afforded the opportunity to pursue promotion in rank within a different track. Promotion criteria should be clearly articulated and communicated to NTTF in a timely manner.

Recommended criteria for annual evaluation and promotion are outlined below.

Teaching

Teaching is at the core of the work carried out by NTTF. Oftentimes, it is the main and exclusive responsibility of most NTTF. As such, it may be direct, as in the case of classroom instruction (online or in person) and group- and/or individually directed learning, or indirect as in the case of academic advising and mentoring. Institutions or programs should have reasonable and uniform standards for how instructional duties are related to faculty budgeted time.

Classroom Instruction

Evidence for quality teaching is documented in faculty manuals at Research I institutions. NTTF ought to carefully familiarize themselves with the expectations set by their institution. In general, it is widely understood that quality teaching encompasses consistent achievements in excellence in teaching and student achievement, which is evidenced by annual evaluation of NTTF. Excellence in teaching is the result of an evaluation that considers a diversified professional portfolio involving multiple indicators that offers evidence for faculty members' attention to ensuring alignment between their teaching philosophy and classroom practices. This evidence will demonstrate how NTTF implement an inclusive pedagogy (and other best practices), demonstrate high levels of student performance (as captured in both quantitative

and qualitative data of student success and engagement), account for positive student evaluations (both quantitative data and qualitative comments), consider relevant peer observations by colleagues (TT or NTT) as well as letters from students and colleagues that offer testimony to their experience or observations of the NTTF, and provides documentation for robust and up-to-date course syllabi and/or lesson plans and instructional materials, examples of students' coursework, as well as continuous course improvements. It is important to recognize that implicit biases, attitudes, and other influences not related to the qualifications, contributions, behaviors, and personalities of faculty can influence evaluations; recognizing biases and other influences not related to the quality of the work evaluated can help reduce their impact on faculty evaluations.

Some institutions also allow, or require, peer reviews of instruction. AAAL strongly encourages this practice and sees it as particularly important in the case of applied linguists working in departments and programs in other fields (e.g., literature). In the spirit of ensuring that NTTF are evaluated by a jury of peers, it is strongly recommended that chairs invite faculty in analogous non-tenure-track positions in other departments or programs to serve on the committee that puts together and presents the case for promotion. In the same vein, when a candidate's teaching is evaluated by a peer, the peer should be an expert in the candidate's field (e.g., language pedagogy) and not simply a departmental member who knows the language.

Online teaching

Highly qualified NTTF involved in online teaching will have demonstrated that their online courses (planning and delivery) adhere to professionally recognized best practices in online teaching and learning (e.g., Quality Matters—course overview, learning objectives/competencies, sound assessment/evaluation, appropriate course materials, diverse activities to foster diverse interactions in the classroom, appropriate technology to support and enhance teaching and learning, additional learner support and opportunities for accessibility and usability to meet diverse needs of diverse learners). All of this will be further supported by strongly positive student evaluations, peer observations, and self-reflections.

AAAL recommends that NTTF who develop new online courses should be provided with appropriate support and professional development. Online courses should be designed to permit both effective communication of course content and ample opportunity for student-faculty interaction and feedback around course content. Hence, enrollment caps associated with online courses should not exceed those associated with in-person courses at an institution. In the interest of maintaining integrity and faculty control of the university curriculum, online teaching materials (or teaching materials in general), should be regarded as the intellectual property of faculty and fully under their control. Only the author of course materials loaded in an online course shell can authorize their redistribution and use by others, generate derivative works, or determine their continued fitness for use.

Development of instructional materials

Depending on the nature of the courses, and, where relevant, the language taught, development of instructional materials may constitute an important aspect of one's teaching responsibilities. Candidates for promotion should carefully review the guidelines of their respective institutions (e.g., Faculty Handbook, Conditions of Faculty Service) that outline whether and how materials development should be recognized. To determine whether and how related efforts should be recognized as part of teaching responsibilities in personnel reviews, AAAL offers the following recommendations:

1. Define what counts as *development*. In the case of Less Commonly Taught Languages, a faculty member may generate an entire curriculum, plan course syllabi, and produce teaching materials. Other relevant activities involve authoring textbooks; development of companion websites and online support materials, such as quizzes and other assessments; and designing, creating, and publishing artifacts such as oral histories, interviews, and community newsletters as part of innovative service-learning projects.
2. Determine how the quality of resulting materials can be assessed. Identification of criteria for assessing the quality of materials is essential. Such evidence could include:
 - a. comments from additional instructors and/or students using the materials, at one's own institution or elsewhere;
 - b. for materials that are later published, the reviews sought by publishers;
 - c. actual empirical assessments of the learning outcomes (variously defined) of classes using the new materials as contrasted with comparison groups;
 - d. studies having a longitudinal orientation, that track students using the new materials as they enter later courses, either language courses or courses in a related area.

All of these types of evidence aim, in one way or another, at making instructional efforts and their impact on students tangible and reviewable by others.

One more materials-related concern we wish to note:

3. Respecting legal/ethical aspects of materials development and use. All faculty members, including non-tenure track faculty, should be aware of the legal and ethical concerns surrounding the preparation and use of teaching materials by their students. Legal matters include knowing the basics of 'fair use' of copyrighted material for instruction in the country where one teaches. Ethical concerns extend to knowing what is appropriate if students are required to purchase a published textbook, or other materials their instructor has authored: (a) do one's own students qualify for a discounted purchase price? (this may depend in part on the publisher); (b) is it reasonable for the author to donate royalties [if there are any] from sales to his/her students to a scholarship fund? Related matters of public perception may need to be addressed and can be particularly salient in public universities where legislators and members of the general public hold strong (if unfounded) beliefs that faculty members who write required textbooks subsequently garner outsized profits from students or families.

Advising and Mentoring

Advising and mentoring are valuable support systems that contribute to student success. NTTF who are assigned these important tasks are expected to demonstrate a consistent record of being available to students to provide key advice for their success and effective integration in the program of study and institution at large as well as preparation for their professional future. This effort may include professional advice regarding possible careers, academic advice to be successful in higher education/profession, information on how to build a successful academic record while in school, and advice on how to build and nurture professional support networks and networking.

At some institutions, NTTF with doctoral degrees may sit on undergraduate and graduate thesis and dissertation committees. The work of non-tenure track faculty guiding student thesis and dissertation research is a valuable and important teaching activity. AAAL recommends NTTF be recognized for and receive credit for this teaching service, especially for committee members who may spend substantial amounts of time meeting one-on-one with students and reading and providing feedback on multiple drafts of students' work. Some institutions may count thesis and dissertation committee work as teaching and others as service. Regardless of how it is counted, promotion committees, and faculty members themselves, should consider the amount of time spent by the faculty member on advising and mentoring. Appropriate student advising loads should also be established.

NTTF can also offer an excellent source of support for the development of graduate students. For graduate students, working with NTTF as their teaching assistants or interns can be a rich learning opportunity. AAAL recommends that NTTF be recognized for and receive credit for this valuable teaching experience. NTTF efforts may be documented through the amount of time spent meeting with graduate assistants and evaluations of the assistants' teaching. The quality of their teaching/mentoring may be evidenced by the assistant success in teaching and receipt of teaching fellowships or awards and for interns in the successful completion of their internship. NTTF should also receive recognition for offering professional development workshops to students and the university community and for efforts to involve students in professional organizations, research, conferences, and formal presentations.

Curricular Work and Administration

At times, NTTF will be expected to engage in program development and review. It is expected that such work will be evaluated regarding current relevant research that supports best practices in curriculum development and implementation. It is recommended that this type of work be counted towards the service load of NTTF.

At other times, some NTTF may be hired to fulfill administration duties. It is expected that the position descriptions will offer details as to the proportion of various duties, and the evaluation of that NTTF ought to be in alignment with the position description per se.

In recognition of the extremely time-consuming nature of these positions, we recommend that they be (a) treated as ‘administrative responsibilities’, distinct from service, (b) compensated with stipends or course reductions, and (c) evaluated through specifically designed criteria that ensure rigor and accountability. The recognition of the unique nature of such positions should find reflections in university documents, such as Conditions of Faculty Service, that specify promotion requirements, and in the initial descriptions of the percentages of time allocations for faculty positions that include such work.

Service

International/National Service

The expectation that NTTF will engage in service in national and/or international contexts is one that usually grows over time. In the early stages of their careers, NTTF will probably concentrate on university-based and community-based service but gradually over time they will be encouraged to expand their outreach to national or international organizations. NTTF who take part of international/national service activities should do so in consultation with and approval of the Department Chair to ensure there is proper alignment of the effort invested with the position description and the annual evaluation of the NTTF. When evaluating this type of effort, attention should be paid to both the type and quality of the contribution. This type of service may include the following activities: service to professional organizations (e.g., serving as leaders, conference reviewers, manuscript reviewers, conference organizers, etc.)

University Service

In the field of applied linguistics, there is a strong expectation that all faculty members, including NTTF, will be involved in university-based service. Initially, this may take the form of department- or program-based service (e.g., serving on a planning committee for an upcoming event, serving on a search committee for a new faculty member, serving on a curriculum committee for the applied linguistics master’s or doctoral program, etc.). With passing time, there will be the expectation that faculty serve on university-wide committees as well (e.g., a Study Abroad Advisory committee, an International Student Advisory Committee, a General Education Curriculum Committee, etc.). With promotion, there will be increasing expectations that the faculty member serve on departmental or college reappointment and promotion committees and that the faculty member assume a more prominent role in the life of the university (e.g., by running for election to Faculty Senate).

Local (State-/Community-based) service

Community-based work is an important component of service activities for applied linguists because it allows us to become embedded in a local community and to connect to local teachers and other community groups which we may not come across otherwise. NTTF who take on local service ought to ensure it is aligned with the position description of NTTF, and that it is valued in the process of annual review.

Some of community-based service tasks may have a formal designation, such as a board member or a consultant for school or other organizations, while others may involve more informal arrangements such as volunteering as an interpreter at a local hospital and other language-related projects. Community-based service may also lead to interaction with leaders in the school or community, with whom we can engage in a collaborative dialog, develop deeper understandings of language issues, and apply our teaching expertise to bring real changes in the community.

Professional Development

NTTF should be provided with orientation, mentoring, and professional support and development opportunities, including campus grant programs, access to sabbatical opportunities (if applicable), support for travel for research (if applicable), and support for participation in professional conferences. In other words, opportunities for professional development should be given in alignment with the position description that details the duties and expectations of NTTF.

NTTF may seek support and professional development in the following areas:

- Teaching and learning and/or online, or a combination of both (i.e., hybrid) instruction depending on the assignment.
- Academic advising and mentoring.
- Leadership/supervisory/administrative/managerial skills

ADVANCEMENT IN RANK

It is recommended that NTTF in applied linguistics who wish to pursue advancement in rank be evaluated by those with the appropriate background and credentials in applied linguistics. This ought to be the case for any internal or external evaluators involved in the assessment of a candidate for purposes of promotion and advancement in rank. NTTF should be reviewed annually with regard to salary levels and opportunities for professional advancement and promotion. Evaluations should be conducted in accordance with established, written criteria for departmental review, and departments should establish procedures for appeal or grievance in the event that a NTTF member alleges substantial violations of such criteria.