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**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON  
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY  
CLINICAL TRACK FACULTY POLICY**

**I. Introduction and Rationale**

The College of Optometry has the primary mission to educate and train a highly qualified optometric workforce for the State of Texas and portions of the Southwestern United States. Clinical education and patient care are cornerstones of this education system which utilizes extensively a preceptor model for much of the process. The highest quality clinical faculty are required, those with extensive patient care training and experience; in addition, special considerations must be made in order to recruit, develop and retain the best clinical faculty members in appropriate career tracks. It is the intent of this policy to lay out a plan and process for the development and growth of clinical faculty members, utilizing a non-tenure track process for the selection, recruitment, appointment, development and promotion of highly qualified clinician educators.

**II. Definition**

Members of the Clinical Track Faculty of the College of Optometry hold non-tenure track appointments. Clinical track faculty members may hold the rank of Clinical Assistant Professor, Clinical Associate Professor or Clinical Professor. The Clinical Faculty track is separate and distinct from the tenure track of the College and University.

**III. Qualifications for Appointment**

Individuals appointed to Clinical Track Faculty positions will be recruited and selected by the same process utilized for all full-time faculty members at the College. In addition, the appointee must have or be eligible to have a full-privileged license to practice optometry (as defined by the College credentialing criteria), medicine or a related healthcare discipline in the State of Texas and, in most cases, must have completed a residency or advanced training program in the appropriate disciplines. Extensive clinical experience and/or clinical education experience may suffice to meet this criterion. All clinical faculty members must, within their first appointment year, meet the credentialing requirements of the University Eye Institute. Clinical Track Faculty members will report to the Chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences and on a day-to-day basis to the Director of the University Eye Institute for patient care duties.

**IV. Appointment Procedure**

Upon recommendation by the Faculty Recruitment Committee, an appointment as a member of the Clinical Track Faculty, including the specific offer and all related conditions, will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences and the Dean of the College. Appointments to the Clinical Track Faculty must be reviewed and approved by the Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Appointment and reappointment letters will stipulate specific roles and responsibilities, which will also serve as the basis for annual performance reviews.

**V. Duration of Appointments**

Appointments to the Clinical Track Faculty of at least 0.5 FTE are benefits eligible, non-tenure track positions and may not be converted to tenure track. Clinical Track Faculty members will not be considered for tenure; therefore, no instructional time in any rank as a member of the Clinical Track Faculty will be counted toward tenure. However, members of the Clinical Track Faculty are eligible to apply and compete for open tenure track faculty positions. Appointments at the rank of Clinical Assistant Professor are typically for one academic year, although a shorter appointment is possible, based upon the

needs of the College. Appointments will be evaluated annually and may be renewed subject to positive reviews and programmatic needs. After three consecutive positive annual reviews, appointments at the rank of Clinical Associate Professor or Clinical Professor may, with the approval of the Dean of the College and the Senior Vice-President for Academic Affairs, include a three-year renewal period. Subsequent renewals depend upon positive annual reviews and the needs of the College.

## **VI. The Role of Clinical Track Faculty**

Specific roles and responsibilities of clinical faculty in the optometry program will be based on the needs of the program and overall needs of the College. The initial roles and responsibilities for a particular faculty member will be outlined in the position description, as well as stipulated in the formal appointment letter. Responsibilities may include classroom teaching, laboratory teaching, clinical teaching, individual one-on-one instruction, patient care, curricular development, clinical rounds, or a combination of these. In view of these diverse roles and responsibilities, appointments to the Optometry Clinical Track Faculty do not carry the same expectations for scholarly activity as do tenure track appointments. However, in all other respects, Clinical Track Faculty will be expected to participate fully in order to carry out the mission, goals and objectives of the College and the University.

## **VII. Privileges**

Clinical Track Faculty will have the same general privileges as tenure track faculty at the University and at the College of Optometry. Clinical track faculty will have full voting privileges at Faculty meetings in the College of Optometry and will be able to serve on all College committees. They may also serve on task forces and ad hoc committees appointed by the Faculty Chair, Department Chair or the Dean. However, clinical track faculty members may not confer in cases of tenure and promotion in tenure track decisions. Clinical Track Faculty will have equal rights and privileges as College faculty to serve on appropriate University councils, committees, task forces, ad hoc committees and to be eligible for election to the Faculty Senate. Clinical track faculty may compete for research grants and awards and teaching awards for which they are eligible.

## **VIII. Evaluation of Clinical Track Faculty**

Clinical Track Faculty at the College of Optometry will have annual reviews. Criteria for evaluation will vary based on the specific expectations of the faculty member's position.

Sample Evaluation Criteria: The following examples are illustrative but not exhaustive:

### **A. Patient Care**

The faculty member must be an outstanding clinician or be on a path to becoming an outstanding clinician by delivering the highest quality patient care. The method for judging this is set forth in the document "Patient Care Evaluation Overview" which describes the patient care evaluation process adopted by the Faculty of the College of Optometry.

### **B. Classroom Teaching**

Where applicable, the quality of teaching will be evaluated based on end of semester course and instructor evaluations conducted by students and assessments completed by the Department Chair and peer faculty members. Quality of teaching also includes the quality of the faculty member's syllabi, presentations, tutorials, seminars, rounds, etc., and adherence to the program's curricular requirements.

### **C. Curricular Development:**

Where applicable, a faculty member may be assessed on the quality of his or her work in curricular development as related to the clinical training program. Factors to be considered may include the development of creative or innovative approaches to clinical instruction and the development of useful teaching strategies.

#### D. Supervision of Personnel

Where applicable, the evaluation process will also assess the faculty member's efforts to train, supervise, and advise Residents and clinical staff members.

#### E. Scholarship

The scholarly requirements of Clinical Track Faculty members are different in nature and quantity than those for tenure track faculty members. Where publication is an applicable responsibility for a member of the Clinical Track Faculty, the evaluation process will assess the faculty member's publications in professional journals and presentations at clinical science meetings. In addition, the development or invention of unique patient care methods, techniques and/or instrumentation may be considered scholarship.

#### F. Service

Service to the faculty, college, university and the profession are expectations of all faculty at the College. The nature of the service is often dictated by the needs of the Department or College. In every case the Clinical Track Faculty members are expected to fulfill this important responsibility adequately and to be good academic citizens.

#### G. Professional/Program Development

Where applicable, the faculty member's evaluation will assess his or her participation in professional/program development. The evaluation may consider involvement in local, national or regional optometric or discipline-specific organization activities and/or the programs of the American Academy of Optometry, the American Optometric Association or its affiliates, or similar organizations of the discipline. Where appropriate, participation may include attendance at professional meetings or functions along with presentations to those professional organizations and/or the delivery of continuing education.

### **IX. Promotion**

Faculty at the College of Optometry are eligible for promotion within the clinical ranks. Distinctions between and among the clinical ranks will initially be based on the level and quality of clinical and/or teaching experience held by the appointee. In seeking promotion, a clinical track faculty member at the College of Optometry must demonstrate excellence. The standard for promotion to the rank of Clinical Professor is the achievement of a national reputation for excellence. For promotion to Clinical Associate Professor, the candidate should have a record showing that there is every expectation that the candidate will meet the standard for promotion to Clinical Professor in due course. Promotion from one clinical rank to a higher rank may occur only after an appropriate time in rank and a formal review by the Department Chair and by the Faculty Review Committee. The Department Chair and the Faculty Review Committee will forward their recommendations in writing to the Dean. The Dean will conduct his/her own review and make a recommendation independent of the initial recommendations. The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs must approve all promotions in rank.

### **X. Compensation**

Clinical Faculty members who are re-appointed and/or promoted for the next academic year will be considered for salary increases in accordance with the university's guidelines for persons classified as benefits eligible faculty.

### **XI. Exceptions**

Any exception to this policy requires written approval of the Dean and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.