

**CLASSIFICATION AND PROMOTION CRITERIA: NON-CLASSIFIED SUPPORT
PERSONNEL DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE**

This policy describes the nature of appointments and opportunities for non-classified research and extension support personnel within the Division of Agriculture. Administrative support personnel are not included in this policy. The purpose of this policy is to: 1) describe the criteria for classification of new employees; 2) provide a framework for meaningful evaluation of performance; 3) recognize and reward excellence in performance of assigned duties; and 4) encourage continued achievement and service.

Categories for non-classified support personnel are Program Technician and Program Associate. Several ranks exist within each category.

PROGRAM TECHNICIAN

The primary duties of a Program Technician are to assist in conducting research or extension activities in accordance with the job description. Program Technicians will be expected to follow guidelines developed by Project Leaders and/or other supervisors. Education and/or experience should be in an appropriate field.

Program Technician I

Persons initially appointed must have a Bachelor's degree.

Program Technician II

Persons initially appointed or promoted to Program Technician II must have a Bachelor's degree and should have 3 years of related work experience and must have demonstrated the proficiency to manage day-to-day activities for which he\she is responsible.

Program Technician III

Persons initially appointed or promoted to Program Technician III must have documented accomplishments and exhibit a high level of achievement in the area of appointment. A Bachelor's degree is required with 10 years of related experience suggested.

The responsibilities and expectations for the Program Technician and Program Associate tracks are to be viewed as distinct and separate.

PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

Program Associates operate in a more independent, decision-making role in the planning and execution of programs than Program Technicians. Work objectives are coordinated with Project Leaders and/or other supervisors, but implementation and management of projects are primarily the responsibilities of the Program Associate. Education and/or experience should be in an appropriate field. Program Associates are expected to contribute effectively to conceptual framework, program design, result dissemination and/or educational activities and the pursuit of extramural financial support.

Program Associate I

Persons initially appointed to this rank must have demonstrated competence to independently manage programs. Education requirements and minimum work experience are a Bachelor's degree with 3 years of related experience, or a Master's degree.

Program Associate II

Persons initially appointed or promoted to this rank must be mature professionally with a sustained record of independent program management. Education and work experience requirements are a Bachelor's degree with 8 years of related experience, or a Master's degree with a minimum of five years of related experience.

Program Associate III

Persons initially appointed or promoted to this rank must have a long-term record of professional excellence and sustained independent program management. Education and work experience requirements are a Bachelor's with 13 years of related experience or a Master's with 10 years of related experience.

POST DOCTORAL ASSOCIATES

Post Doctoral Associates must hold a Doctoral degree. Normally these positions will be for a defined period with responsibilities assigned to a specific project. There is no promotion system for post doctoral associates.

INITIAL APPOINTMENT

Position announcements for non-classified support positions should specify that a Program Technician or Program Associate is desired based on the expected duties and educational experience required. When a candidate of choice is selected and hired, an appropriate rank within the category of Program Technician or Program Associate should be designated based on the educational level and related experience of the candidate. The rank along with negotiated salary that falls within the range for the title and rank should be included in the letter of offer.

Development of a Job Description and Position Announcement

A job description will be developed prior to advertisement of a position. This description will include the major areas of responsibility and qualifications for the position. A position announcement will be developed based on this job description. Based on the qualifications desired, the position announcement should designate the position title as a Program Technician or Program Associate.

Development of a Job-Specific Personnel Performance Evaluation Document

At the beginning of each year, or within 30 days after initial appointment, the supervisor, in consultation with the employee, working from the job description, will develop a list of major responsibility areas (two to six) on which the employee's performance will be evaluated. Major responsibilities should be broadly enough defined to accommodate variations and flexibility in specific schedules and activities, yet specific enough to the job assignments to allow objective review by supervisors and peers. The supervisor may provide more detailed specifications for completion of specific tasks within each responsibility area. Those should be referred to in a statement of responsibility areas but should not be included in the submitted evaluation

documents. An estimation of annual percentage time allocation for each activity will be indicated next to each responsibility area. The document listing responsibility area descriptions for evaluation will be signed by the employee, the immediate supervisor and appropriate reviewing official, and a copy will be placed in the employee's personnel file. Changes of assigned responsibilities will be made in writing by the supervisor to the employee within four weeks of change. The list of major responsibility area assignments will be included in the completed standard performance evaluation form at the end of the year and serve as a basis for evaluation.

EVALUATION

Annual performance evaluations are an integral component of professional development. The following evaluation procedure is intended as a tool to assess performance and is structured to ensure that the incumbent fulfill his/her potential and perform at a level commensurate with his/her rank. Annually each support person will be evaluated by his/her immediate supervisor using the non-classified support personnel annual performance rating form.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

No later than 30 days after the initial appointment, each non-classified support person shall be advised in writing by his/her supervisor of the criteria, procedures and instruments that are to be used in assessing his/her work.

Evaluation Process

Annually, each employee will complete all applicable portions of the nonclassified support personnel annual performance review form summarizing activities during the past year. The completed form will be submitted to the immediate supervisor(s) for review and performance ratings. The employee will document: 1) activities and progress in major responsibility areas, in other projects to which contributions were made and other supporting roles; 2) supplemental information on meetings attended, presentations, papers, creative endeavors, team efforts, grants received, awards and certifications, skills acquired, training received/rendered and services rendered; and 3) a summary of major contributions and future goals. The evaluation process for non-classified support persons will be as follows:

- 1) Each employee will be evaluated on an annual basis;
- 2) Major responsibility areas of each employee will be defined by the supervisor in conjunction with the employee at the beginning of the evaluation period and placed on file;
- 3) Each employee will complete applicable portions of a non-classified support personnel annual performance review form summarizing the previous year's activities for submission to his/her immediate supervisor(s);
- 4) The supervisor will complete a standard annual performance rating form and discuss results with the employee;
- 5) An employee may attach comments regarding the evaluation;
- 6) Evaluation documents will be reviewed by the next higher official to the rating supervisor (reviewing official) or designated official and placed in the employee's permanent file; and
- 7) The most recently signed evaluation documents will be included in materials presented to committee(s) for promotion consideration.

Performance Review and Rating

The immediate supervisor(s) will review the non-classified support personnel annual performance review form and complete a performance rating form. If an employee is assigned to more than one supervisor, it is required that rating forms be completed by each supervisor and averaged numerical ratings (weighted average based on percent allocation to each supervisor) will be summarized on a separate form. Supervisor ratings will be made on the following basis:

1. Performance of the employee in his/her job assignment, as documented at the beginning of the evaluation period.
2. Ratings should be made against a reasonable standard of acceptable performance. Raters should not be influenced by personal compatibility issues, previous records, unrealized employee potential, recent events or isolated cases. Neither extremely high supervisor expectations nor negative feedback from the employee should be a part of the evaluation process.
3. Raters should indicate any areas of superior performance relative to the general responsibilities and specific duties of the position. In addition, raters should indicate areas that need improvement.

After the supervisor has completed the rating form, he/she will review the performance rating form with the employee and allow the employee to attach comments regarding the rating. Forms will be signed by the employee and immediate supervisor(s), then reviewed and signed by the appropriate reviewing official and placed in the employee's permanent file. The signed performance rating forms will be included in materials submitted for promotion consideration.

PROMOTION

Although there is no minimum time that one must spend in rank it is anticipated that program technicians and associates will spend at least five years in rank between promotions. Promotion is based primarily on performance, accomplishments, and responsibilities supplemented by time in rank. All committee decisions concerning promotion of an individual should be by a 2/3 majority vote. There is no maximum time an individual may remain in a given rank. Only full-time (100 percent-appointed) employees are eligible for promotion.

PROMOTION PROCEDURES

The evaluation for promotion shall be within the context of the position description and the stated expectations for Program Technician and Program Associate position tracks. An application will consist of a promotion document submitted to the local Department/Unit committee to which the applicant is assigned, along with the signed evaluations from all years in current rank, a current job description, any previous job descriptions while in current rank, and letter from the immediate supervisor. The unit committee shall notify each applicant (in writing) of the committee recommendation and give rationale for the decision if promotion is not recommended. The unit committee should forward all applications (whether or not recommended for promotion) to the Support Personnel Promotion Committee (SPPC) along with a supporting letter from the Unit Administrator. An applicant may withdraw the application for promotion at any step of the process. The promotion document will follow the format of the annual performance review document but will cover the period since the initial appointment or the last promotion. The unit committee will be made up of at least three people (including at least one non-classified support person) appointed by the Unit Administrator. If the local committee does

not recommend the applicant for consideration, the applicant may appeal the decision through the appeals process.

The SPPC will be appointed by the Vice President for Agriculture and will consist of eight (8) regular members representing a full range of division units [one Program Technician (extension), one Program Technician (research), one Program Associate (extension), one Program Associate (research), one Research and Extension Center Director, one Department Head, one research Project Leader, one extension Project Leader] and two alternates. The alternates will serve in the absence of regular members or in the event that a committee member is under consideration for promotion. The chairperson (a Unit Head) will be appointed by the Vice President for Agriculture and is a non-voting member. An individual committee member will serve no longer than three years. Terms of the committee membership plan will be staggered to ensure continuity. The committee will forward to the appropriate Associate Vice President Research/Extension the documents of those individuals recommended for promotion, who will forward this recommendation to the Vice President for Agriculture.

Appeals Process

All candidates for promotion will be notified of the decisions in writing from the unit committee and then from the SPPC. If the candidate does not agree with the decision reached by the committees, they may appeal the decision in writing to their immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will forward the appeal to the Vice President for Agriculture. An appeals committee will be formed from candidates nominated from each unit. The Vice President for Agriculture will appoint an ad hoc appeals committee consisting of the same structure as SPPC. No member of SPPC will be eligible to serve on the committee. A unit head leader appointed by the Vice President for Agriculture will serve as chair of the committee. No committee member will be selected from the membership of the promotion committee or from the unit in which the appealing candidate resides. The chair of the promotion committee, and the AAES and CES personnel officer will serve as ex officio, non-voting members of the appeals committee. The chair of the promotion committee will provide all documentation related to the promotion committee's deliberations of the appealing candidate. The appeals committee will make a recommendation to the Vice President for Agriculture, who will inform the appealing candidate in writing.

NON-CLASSIFIED SUPPORT PERSONNEL PROMOTION PROCESS

August 1: The Vice President for Agriculture solicits nominations for committee members from the Associate Vice President(s). Unit Heads are notified by the Associate Vice President(s) to remind faculty of the process timetable.

August 25: Letters are sent to committee members from the Vice President for Agriculture.

August 30-September 15: Department Head / State Leader / Center Director (Unit Head) will inform in writing the non-classified support personnel of the promotion review schedule, criteria, procedures, requirements for the current year.

October 15: Applicants for promotion will provide a promotion document to the Unit Head to which the applicant is assigned. The application will include a promotion document, evaluations from all years in current rank, current job description, any previous job descriptions while in current rank, a letter from the immediate supervisor (which may be provided directly from the supervisor to the Unit Head) and other material as appropriate.

October 15-20: Unit Head forwards the promotion package to the Unit Review Committee.

October 31-November 15: Unit Review Committee notifies each applicant in writing of the committee recommendations and gives rationale for the decision if promotion is not recommended.

November 15–30: The Unit Review Committee forwards all applications whether or not recommended for promotion to the Division of Agriculture Non-Classified Support Personnel Committee Chair along with a support letter from the Unit Head. An applicant may withdraw the application for promotion at any step of the process.

December 1-January 15: The Division of Agriculture Non-Classified Support Personnel Committee meets to review applications and make recommendations. Committee Chair will forward documents, recommendations of the Division of Agriculture Non-Classified Support Personnel Committee, and rationale to the appropriate Associate Vice President for those individuals considered for promotion. If individuals are jointly appointed, copies will be sent to both Associate Vice Presidents.

February 1-15: The promotion documents including a letter of recommendation from the respective Associate Vice President will be forwarded to the Vice President for Agriculture. Associate Vice President(s) forward only documents from candidates recommended for approval.

March 1-15: Vice President for Agriculture notifies candidates of his/her recommendation.

May: Promotion recommendations acted upon by the Board of Trustees.

May 20: Vice President for Agriculture sends letters to applicants. Promotion list sent to the Associate Vice Presidents and the Human Resources offices.

July 1: Promotions approved by the Board of Trustees become effective.

Non-Classified Support Personnel Promotion Process

