Office of Continuing Professional Development
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Behind the Promotion Process Curtain

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It's that time of year again when faculty begin working through the promotion process. Promotion at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) is framed as a significant career milestone affirming a faculty member's contributions to academic medicine. The scholarly literature highlights several intrinsic benefits of academic promotion for faculty in medical schools. Promotion is often described as a public acknowledgment of academic identity and sustained contribution, reinforcing a sense of professional purpose and belonging. Walling's *Academic Promotion for Clinicians* characterizes advancement in rank as a visible affirmation of excellence that benefits not only the individual but also patients, learners, colleagues, and the institution as a whole. Studies of faculty advancement and engagement in academic medical centers link supportive promotion structures to greater career satisfaction, stronger commitment to academic careers, and improved retention of talented educators and clinicians.

Promotion at VTCSOM is grounded in "four areas of achievement:" teaching, research/scholarship, clinical care (in the presence of learners), and service. All faculty are required to engage in each area, but the expectations for advancement differ slightly by role. Clinical faculty seeking promotion must demonstrate either significant progress (assistant to associate) or excellence (associate to professor) in any two of the four areas; basic science and other non-clinician faculty follow the same standard, with the added general expectation that scholarly activity is one of the two domains achieved to meet this bar. All candidates must assemble a promotion dossier that follows the current VTCSOM Promotion Dossier Requirements, including an updated CV, personal statement, evidence of performance in each domain, and other supporting materials.

An important component of every promotion dossier is evidence of teaching excellence through peer observation. All faculty members seeking promotion are required to complete two peer reviews of teaching prior to each promotion. These observations must occur in different semesters, have at least 3 months in-between occurrences, focus on different instructional events, be conducted by two different reviewers, and the results must be summarized in writing for inclusion in the promotion dossier. Faculty may participate in a department-based peer observation process or use the peer observation program offered by the TEACH Academy. The intent is not only to meet a requirement, but to foster a culture of instructional excellence and reflective teaching across the school.

The formal promotion timeline spans close to 18 months and requires careful planning and early conversations with leaders. For the 2026–27 cycle, candidates are encouraged to meet with their department chair prior to beginning formal preparations at the beginning of 2026 to signal their intent and receive initial guidance. Between the beginning of February and the end of May, faculty formally consult with their chair and develop their dossier. Promotion candidates must turn in their completed dossiers to the departmental Appointment, Promotion, Retention, and Tenure (APRT) committee no later than May 31, 2026. Over the summer, the APRT committee solicits letters of evaluation, reviews all materials, and submits a recommendation to the chair by August 31. The chair then conducts an independent review in early fall and, if in agreement that the candidate should move forward, forwards the dossier and chair's letter to the VTCSOM Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) committee by the firm October 31, 2026 deadline.

From there, dossiers are reviewed by the VTCSOM APT committee (November 2, 2026–January 29, 2027), the Dean (February 2027), the Virginia Tech Provost and President, and ultimately the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, with final approvals typically completed by June 30. Promotions for this cycle will be effective July 1, 2027. To support faculty at every step, the Office of Faculty Affairs maintains an "Applying for Promotion" hub with current guidelines, dossier templates, "do's and don'ts," personal statement guidance, and the December 2025 Promotion Workshop video and slides: **Applying for Promotion**. Faculty can also learn more about the broader work of the office at the **VTCSOM Faculty Affairs** page and are encouraged to email **vtcsomfaculty@vt.edu** or **swhicker@vt.edu** with additional questions or concerns.

1. Walling A. *Academic Promotion for Clinicians: A Practical Guide for Promotion and Tenure in Medical Schools*. Switzerland, AG: Springer Cham; 2024.
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3. Jacobs CK, Everard KM, Cronholm PF. Promotion of Clinical Educators: A Critical Need in Academic Family Medicine. Fam Med. 2020;52(9):631-634. **https://doi.org/10.22454/FamMed.2020.687091**.
4. Sancheznieto F, Byars-Winston A. Value, Support, and Advancement: An Organization's Role in Faculty Career Intentions in Academic Medicine. *J Healthc Leadersh*. 2021;13:267-277. Published 2021 Nov 19. doi:10.2147/JHL.S334838

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