PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE

Rank, Title and Status

Appointment as “Professor of the Practice” may be offered by the University to a limited number of eminently qualified creative, business, entrepreneurial, law, or other professionals who are recognized by peers as having made significant contributions to fields and disciplines important to Northeastern University programs. Because of the eminent stature of individuals offered these positions, this title has only two ranks: Professor of the Practice and Distinguished Professor of the Practice.

Professor and Distinguished Professor of the Practice appointments are non-tenure-track, and service in these ranks may not be applied towards tenure consideration at Northeastern under any circumstances.

For communications purposes, holders of such appointments may be referred to as “Professor [or Distinguished Professor] of the Practice of X,” where X is an academic discipline or specialty.

Rights and Responsibilities

A Professor of the Practice makes a continuing commitment to both teaching and academic service and may maintain his or her professional activities outside of the university as long as these activities do not conflict with the duties of his or her academic appointment. Professors of the Practice may be appointed at any fraction of a full-time appointment. Professors of the Practice in benefits-eligible appointments are governed by Northeastern’s Conflict of Commitment and Interest policy; all Professors of the Practice, whatever the status of their appointment, must disclose, and cooperate fully with University officials in managing, potential conflicts of interest.

The specific responsibilities and expectations of each Professor of the Practice position, including expectations or agreements concerning continued outside professional activity, will be approved by the dean of the hiring unit and itemized in the faculty member’s letter of appointment. At the discretion of the dean and with the approval of the Senior Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education, a Professor of the Practice may be considered a “Principal Investigator” for the purpose of submitting grants proposals through Northeastern, and may support some or all of his or her salary through external funding.

1 Passed by the Faculty Senate 30 January 2013; approved by the Provost 12 March 2013 and by the Board of Trustees 7 June 2013.
Professors of the Practice enjoy the protections of academic freedom and are governed by the Performance Expectations relevant to their specific duties, including adherence to University policies and professional standards of conduct in the course of their fulfilling their teaching, research and service obligations.

Appointments, Terms, and Reappointments

Faculty appointments as Professor or Distinguished Professor of the Practice are made by the dean with the approval of the Provost, following consultation with the faculty in the professor’s unit(s) of appointment. Faculty members are appointed to these ranks on the basis of outstanding and sustained professional accomplishment, which may or may not include possession of an earned terminal degree.

Professors of the Practice will be appointed for a minimum of one semester or quarter and a maximum of five academic years, to be stipulated in the appointment letter, and the appointment may be renewed for a period of up to five years, to be stipulated in the new appointment letter at the discretion of the dean and with the concurrence of the faculty of the unit(s) and the Provost. A faculty member initially appointed at the rank of Professor of the Practice may, at the discretion of the dean and with the agreement of the Provost, be reappointed at the rank of Distinguished Professor of the Practice.

All appointments and reappointments are contingent upon documentation of U.S. citizenship or upon maintaining the appropriate visa status and work authorization.

Notice of Non Reappointment

No appointment as Professor or Distinguished Professor of the Practice carries a guarantee of future reappointments. Non-reappointment of a Professor or Distinguished Professor of the Practice is discretionary, based upon the dean’s assessment of need and the ability of the individual to advance the interests of the college and the University. Northeastern will make reasonable efforts to provide three month’s written notice of the University’s intent not to renew a Professor of the Practice appointment.

Annual Evaluation and Salary Determination

Professors of the Practice will be evaluated annually and are eligible for raises on the basis of their performance of the duties set out in their letters of appointment as part of the unit’s usual merit review process.

Eligibility for Leaves of Absence

Professors of the Practice in benefits-eligible appointments are eligible for leave under the terms of the Family and Medical Leave Act. Faculty members in these ranks may, with the approval of the dean, take a personal or professional leave of absence of up to one year, if the leave is unpaid or if any continuing compensation during the leave period is provided by external funds. Professors of the Practice are not eligible for University-funded sabbatical leaves.
Dismissal

Dismissal of a Professor of the Practice before the end of an appointment period may occur for cause. Incompetence in the faculty member’s professional capacity; neglect of duty; repeated and/or willful disregard of the rules of the University or of academic freedom; physical or mental incapacity; or any other conduct of a character seriously prejudicial to a faculty member’s teaching or research or to the welfare of the University, its faculty, staff or students may each constitute cause for dismissal.

Dismissal for cause will normally be preceded by written notice of the performance concerns or other issues which form the basis for the dismissal, an opportunity to address these concerns, and/or prior disciplinary action. However, in an unusually sudden or serious case, a faculty member may be dismissed without prior notice.

When reason arises to consider whether cause exists to dismiss a faculty member before the end of an appointment period, the faculty member’s dean shall first invite the faculty member to discuss the issue and work towards a resolution. If the dean, following discussion with the faculty member, believes there is probably cause for dismissal, he/she shall formulate a preliminary statement of charges and evidence, a copy of which shall be given to the faculty member who shall have the opportunity to comment.

If, following the faculty member’s opportunity to comment, the dean believes that there is good cause to proceed further, he/she shall convene a hearing committee of three faculty members to be chosen by the Senate Agenda Committee after consultation with the Provost. The committee shall meet with the faculty member, the dean, and other parties the committee believes may have knowledge relevant to the charges. If the charges against the faculty member include professional incompetence, the hearing committee shall meet with other faculty members qualified to address the issue. During the committee’s proceedings the faculty member may elect to be accompanied by a faculty advisor of his or her own choice. The faculty advisor must be a full-time member of the Northeastern University community. As this is a personnel matter, the hearing committee process shall be closed. Only the dean, the faculty member, the faculty advisor, and the witnesses shall be entitled to attend. The hearing shall be confidential and no committee member or attendee shall be permitted to divulge the content of the proceedings.

The faculty member and the dean shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to obtain necessary witnesses and documentary or other evidence. Both the faculty member and the dean have the right to confront and cross-examine all witnesses. All decisions and recommendations of the committee, both substantive and procedural, will be made by majority vote of the committee members. With respect to other procedural matters, the hearing committee may establish its own rules so long as they are consistent with the rules noted herein.

The hearing committee shall conclude its gathering of evidence concerning the dismissal charges within 30 days of beginning hearings and shall render its recommendation in writing to the dean and the faculty member within 14 days of the conclusion of hearings. If the hearing committee recommends dismissal, the dean shall allow the faculty member 10 business days to respond before forwarding the recommendation and any response to the Provost. If the hearing
committee recommends against dismissal, the dean may append a response before forwarding the recommendation, within 10 business days, to the Provost. The Provost's decision will be final and will be communicated to the faculty member, the dean and the chair of the hearing committee. If the Provost's decision differs from the recommendation of the hearing committee, s/he will provide a rationale. As this process constitutes a personnel decision, all those individuals authorized to receive the final decision shall maintain the confidentiality of the process and shall not divulge the decision or the rationale, if any, to anyone else, either within or outside of the University.