

Criteria for Promotion in Rank - Extension Educators
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Promotion in rank is a principled way to recognize exemplary performance. A faculty member is eligible for promotion based on the scholarship of Extension in the context of their position description, letter of offer, and apportionment. The scholarship of the individual faculty member should demonstrate his/her individual contributions to organizational goals, the specific outcomes he/she has achieved, and their contributions to scholarly products.

A candidate for promotion cannot assume that meeting the minimal criteria is automatically sufficient. In the period between rank appointment, the faculty member can find guidance for professional growth by viewing the terms expressed in the letter of offer and the position description. Additionally, annual evaluations completed by supervisor(s) and Annual Faculty Progress Form completed by peers and administrators will also provide helpful feedback.

Promotion decisions are based upon an evaluation of the candidate's entire record. A positive sustained upward trajectory between the ranks is expected. Faculty are expected to show evidence of scholarship in Extension and the key practices of excellence in Extension. Early academic rank expectations apply to subsequent ranks.

Assistant Extension Educator

Appointment to the rank of assistant educator signifies that a faculty member is well qualified to launch upon a full-fledged academic career and pursue a personal level of achievement. This is an individual with initiative, ambition, and a collaborative spirit. Qualifications include completion of a master's degree.

Associate Extension Educator

To attain the rank of associate extension educator, the candidate should be an accomplished extension professional with a strong record of scholarly and creative work in extension that fulfills the individual's job description.

A positive sustained upward trajectory in the scholarship of Extension should be evident: identifying key issues; setting goals and objectives with significant impact; delivering a breadth and depth of learning experiences that transforms knowledge to behavior change; engaging people in learning environments for mutual benefit; measuring outcomes and impacts; sharing products and impacts through scholarly work.

The file should demonstrate accomplishments in identified key practices and indicators of Extension excellence: professionalism; engagement; teaching; innovation; relevance; meaningful; impactful; research and discovery; embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion. The faculty member can document a reputation for excellence in their discipline and focused area.

Time-in-rank as an assistant educator is ordinarily at least five years, and typically six years. *Earlier promotion implies that the candidate has accomplished in the shorter time what would normally be expected in the longer one. Candidates should typically have a minimum of five years in rank as of the October 1 due date for promotion files.*

Extension Educator

The rank of educator is given to faculty whose achievements are sufficient to merit distinguished recognition in their discipline and who hold the professional respect of their colleagues.

A positive sustained upward trajectory in the scholarship of Extension should be evident: identifying key issues; setting goals and objectives with significant impact; delivering a breadth and depth of learning experiences that transforms knowledge to behavior change; engaging people in learning environments for mutual benefit; measuring outcomes and impacts; sharing products and impacts through scholarly work.

The file should demonstrate a high level of accomplishments in the identified key practices and indicators of Extension excellence: professionalism; engagement; teaching; innovation; relevance; meaningful; impactful; research and discovery; embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Educators show accomplishments and impacts in two or three topic areas sustained over several years with significant depth and breadth of programming. The impact of their work is demonstrated in behavior change, and application of knowledge. The quality of the work should be sufficient to merit regional and national recognition.

The record must show evidence of sustained excellence over an extended period of time. *Ordinarily, time in-rank as an associate educator is at least six years, and typically seven years. Earlier promotion implies that the candidate has accomplished in the shorter time what would normally be expected in the longer one. Candidates should typically have a minimum of six years in rank as of the October 1 due date for promotion files.*

Scholarship in Extension

Scholarship in Extension is a process that should be clearly documented:

- Identify complex emerging and relevant issues.
- Set goals that reflect intended social, environmental, and economic impacts.
- Set objectives that anticipate change and significant outcomes.
- Deliver a breadth and depth of learning experiences that transform knowledge into attitude change and behavior change.
- Engage people for mutual benefit, develop learning environments, create knowledge, and solve problems.

- Measure the outcomes (actual change in behaviors) and impacts (social, environmental, or economic change) that demonstrate progress towards meaningful goals.
- Share products and impacts through scholarly presentations and writings.

Excellence in Extension Key Practices

These quality attributes are essential to excellence as an Extension professional. The following key practices and indicators described are integral to creation and delivery of learning experiences focused on critical issues that empower Nebraskans to improve their lives.

Professionalism - Extension professionals are respected (people know and trust you), knowledgeable (data/research driven), creators of products of exceptional quality, and effective leaders. They uphold the standards of conduct, behavior and attitude expected by the professional's peers as well as Extension clientele.

Engagement - Many organizations provide outreach, Extension embraces engagement. Engagement involves the development of sustained, long-term working relationships with a target audience, collaborator, or partner. Extension professionals practice engagement by working with learners to assess their needs, develop and evaluate educational experiences and remaining connected with learners as transformational changes are considered or made by the learner.

Exceptional Teaching & Learning – Extension professionals create and deliver educational experiences that are based on sound science and research, provide multiple opportunities for reaching a targeted audience with content that is available 24/7/365, provide in-depth learning opportunities, and reach the full range of learners from the novice to the most sophisticated by utilizing effective teaching strategies.

Innovation - Extension professionals will initiate creative and innovative work that includes strategic risk taking. They may utilize unique approaches to assemble and leverage resources, creative methods packaging research into educational products for reaching targeted audiences, and innovative methods for creating impactful learning experiences.

Relevance – Extension professionals invest in identifying critical issues and developing/adapting educational programs to respond to those issues. Engagement in advanced professional development to enhance content expertise as well as strengthen skills in innovative program development, delivery, and assessment is part of the on-going continuous improvement expectation for Extension. This results in Extension professionals being change agents for issues of high relevance and value for Nebraskans.

Meaningful – Extension professionals create just-in-time learning to empower people to make informed decisions at their time of greatest need. Extension professionals also recognize that

the learning interests of clientele on any one issue lie on a continuum ranging from improved awareness on one end to in-depth learning expectations and behavior change on the other.

Impactful – Extension Professionals make a difference economically, socially, and environmentally in the lives of the people we serve and contribute to the measurement of indicators of that impact for those outcomes identified as critical to Nebraskans. Those measures of impact contribute to continuous improvement of the educational initiative and to the public’s recognition of the value created by Nebraska Extension.

Research & Discovery – Extension professionals use research as the foundation for educational experiences. Extension professionals recognize that our clientele make many decisions based upon some degree of balance between science, economics, and values. Extension professionals strive to deliver education that contributes to the science and economic aspects of those decisions and rely on individuals to weigh their individual values into their final decisions. Extension professionals develop and deliver outstanding research that contributes to the economic, environmental, and/or social understanding of learner’s decisions.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Nebraska Extension is committed to cultivating inclusive excellence – embracing diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and equity. Extension professionals will engage with community partners, organizations, and other audiences, as well as individuals within the organization in ways that reflect an understanding and value for individual differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, abilities, gender, sexual orientation, religion). Extension professionals will also recognize that some populations have been and remain marginalized in U.S. society and intentionally identify ways to remove barriers to those who have been historically underrepresented or excluded. Extension will strive to ensure that creative activities, research, learning experiences, and policies promote equity to address systemic causes of disparities. Nebraska Extension policies and practices will not discriminate based upon any protected status.

June 16, 2022