

Policy on the Appointment/Reappointment of Department Chairs and Instructional Center Directors

Date: June 7, 2022	Policy ID: ENG-Fac-010	Status: Final
Reviewed Date: June 16, 2025		

Contact Office: Office of the Dean
engrdean@virginia.edu

Oversight Executive: Dean

Applies to: Department Chairs and Instructional Center Directors in the School of Engineering and Applied Science

Reason for Policy

The policy described here provides guidelines regarding the terms and the process of appointment and reappointment of department chairs and instructional center directors.

Policy Statement:

Each department and instructional center in Engineering is led by a department chair or instructional center director whose authority is described in the Engineering policy:

<https://engineering.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/common/offices/deans-office/policies-bylaws/Responsibilities%20of%20Department%20Chairs%20in%20the%20School%20of%20Engineering.pdf>

SEAS Department Chairs and Instructional Center Directors serve for terms of up to five years. For departments that are joint with another school with a different standard term duration, the chair can negotiate with both deans an appropriate term, not to exceed five years.

The steps to be used when a department chair or instructional center director is to be appointed or reappointed are as follows:

- If the current department chair or instructional center director wishes to step down before the end of his/her term, he/she must inform the dean in writing, preferably one year before the desired end to the appointment. Otherwise, one year before the end of the current appointment term, the current chair or instructional center director and the dean will meet to discuss whether the chair or instructional center director should seek reappointment.

The dean or the dean's designee forms a committee of faculty. This committee consists of:

- a) Three to four faculty from the department or instructional center in question

- b) One to two faculty from another SEAS department or instructional center, including a chair or instructional center director or former chair or instructional center director, who will chair the committee
- c) One staff member from the department or instructional center
- d) One student or former student.
- e) A person external to UVA, such as a member of the department's advisory board, may be included.
- f) The committee makeup should reflect the unit's ratio of tenure-track and AGF faculty, when possible.
 - If the current chair or instructional center director is seeking reappointment, the committee is responsible for making a recommendation to the dean on reappointment
 - If the current chair does not wish to be reappointed or is not reappointed by the dean, the committee fulfills the role of a search committee for a new chair or instructional center director.
- If the current chair or instructional center director requests consideration for reappointment, the individual must provide the committee with a complete CV and a written report including:
 - A summary of the chair or instructional center director's accomplishments during the term as chair,
 - A plan describing goals and strategies to be undertaken in the following term of office.

The chair or instructional center director should also indicate the length of term requested, up to five years. Following a faculty and staff interview of the individual, and with input from the faculty, staff, and representatives of other stakeholder groups (undergraduate students, graduate students, advisory boards, etc., as appropriate), the committee makes a recommendation to the dean concerning the reappointment of the current chair or instructional center director. The decision to reappoint rests with the dean.

- If a new chair/instructional center director is to be appointed, the committee, with input from the current Chair/instructional center director and the department faculty, determines if the search should be internal or external to the department. If the committee determines that an external search is desirable, a request must be made to the dean outlining compelling reasons for the external search. The decision to initiate an external search rests with the dean.
- Whether the search for a new chair/instructional center director is internal or external, the committee assembles a pool of candidates holding the rank of professor. All candidates must provide the committee a complete CV and a written report including:
 - A summary of the candidate's leadership and administrative experience,

- A description of the candidate's recent research, teaching and service activities (or a copy of the last two annual reports),
 - A plan describing goals and strategies to be undertaken during the term as chair/instructional center director.
- Once a short-list of two to three of the best candidates has been determined, these candidates are interviewed in person by the dean, faculty, and staff. Following these interviews, and with input from the faculty and staff, the committee submits a report to the dean summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of the viable candidates. The selection of the new chair/instructional center director rests with the dean.
- If the search for a new chair/instructional center director is unsuccessful, the committee recommends to the dean a viable interim chair/instructional center director who can serve until the position can be filled.
- In exceptional cases, the dean may extend a chair or instructional center director's appointment for reasons such as: continuity of the leadership team, completion of an important project, short-term absence of the next chair/instructional center director, etc.