

TERM PROFESSORIAL APPOINTMENTS  
INITIAL TERM (“Q”) APPOINTMENTS FOR NEW  
ASSOCIATE AND FULL PROFESSORS  
*and*  
SPECIAL AGREEMENTS FOR DEFINITE TERM  
 (“W”) APPOINTMENTS TO FACULTY RANKS

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST  
COMMUNICATION NO. 5

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## **Overview**

Two types of term professorial appointments are described in this policy. The first, the initial term (“Q”) appointment, is the most common and involves appointment as an associate or full professor but with an initial probationary period before review for indefinite tenure. The second, a special written agreement that waives the faculty member's right to tenure or consideration for tenure (a “W” agreement), is granted only very rarely.

“Q” appointments are appropriate to consider when a unit recruiting a person from outside the University finds that the candidate does not yet possess the record of particular achievement expected of a tenured member on this campus, even though the person is of relatively senior standing in the field. This situation is often encountered when the nominee has developed his or her career in a nonacademic setting where there has been limited opportunity to publish and/or no opportunity to teach. With the prior approval of the Provost, a “Q” appointment permits the unit to offer an initial appointment at the rank of associate or full professor without indefinite tenure. The person may then be evaluated for tenure through the normal process according to the schedule below during the “Q” appointment period.

Even more rarely, circumstances arise in which it is appropriate to enter into a special written agreement with an individual for a “W” appointment at the rank of assistant, associate or full professor with an appointment for a definite term. A “W” appointment releases the University from any commitment to grant tenure. Such appointments are given only under exceptional circumstances.

## **Calendar of Events**

Consideration of a “Q” appointment may arise at any point in the recruitment cycle. The request should be processed through the normal channels for appointments to the faculty. Units may expect response from the Office of the Provost about one work week after receipt in that office.

Consideration of a “W” appointment requires advance consultation and approval from the Office of the Provost.

## “Q” Appointments

Should it be decided that the first appointment with the University at the rank of associate or full professor is to be for a definite term, the department may recommend a “Q” appointment. Any request for a “Q” appointment must be transmitted from the unit through the appropriate channels.

The authority for the “Q” appointment status is found in the University of Illinois *Statutes*. Article X, Section 1a(1) provides that “an appointment as professor or associate professor shall be for an indefinite term, except that first appointments or temporary appointments may be for shorter periods.”

Normally, the initial term of the “Q” appointment may be for up to four years, with the final year being the terminal year, if necessary. In unusual circumstances, a term beyond four years may be considered. **By the end of the penultimate year (at the latest), a determination must be made whether the person will be recommended for tenure or whether the appointment at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign will terminate at the end of the next year.**

*Note: An individual appointed to a 4-year “Q” appointment receives a full review for tenure no later than the end of the individual’s third year on campus; those appointed to a three-year term are reviewed no later than the end of the second year, and so on. It is not possible to be appointed for a one-year “Q” appointment. Please consider the term carefully when preparing the request for a “Q” appointment.*

Length of Appointment	Review in Year:
4	3
3	2
2	1

### DOCUMENTATION

Because consideration for tenure will occur within a few years, the case for a “Q” appointment should be made with a documentary record stronger than that typical of a new assistant professor, but it need not be so full as that expected for a tenured appointment. Even so, most of the same important elements should be present, including:

- ∞ a complete, updated curriculum vitae;
- ∞ an analysis of the quality, significance, and impact of the nominee’s prior contributions;
- ∞ a prognosis for the nominee's performance as a teacher;

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∞ a critical evaluation of the nominee's standing by appropriate external authorities.

If a unit recommends a “Q” appointment on the basis of an open search, some of the letters normally would be obtained upon the candidate’s direct request to the evaluator. However, in addition, executive officers should obtain some external letters by their own solicitation. Under favored practice, a majority of the external letters should be obtained by the unit without the candidate's intervention. **In other words, the unit must not rely entirely on the candidate to manage the external review.**

Attachment 1 lists the documentation required for review of a proposed “Q” appointment.

### **Expiration of “Q” Appointment**

No later than the penultimate year of the “Q” contract (see table on page 2), units must take one of the following actions:

1. The staff member may be recommended for indefinite tenure at the current rank or be recommended for indefinite tenure and promotion. If the decision is to recommend indefinite tenure, the department must forward promotion papers through the regular promotion and tenure process and channels to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (see Communication No. 9). The recommendation is considered on the normal annual cycle.
2. If a review indicates that the scholarly record does not warrant indefinite tenure, then the unit should notify the staff member that he/she will not be reappointed (See Communication No. 10). This notice should occur no later than May 15 of the penultimate year of the contract. The notice will provide the faculty member one year’s notice and an opportunity for a terminal year under the initial contract.

### **“W” Term Appointments**

The execution of a *Special Agreement to Accept Academic Appointment and Reappointment for a Definite Term* waives a staff member’s right to all tenure provisions for academic staff contained in Article X of the University of Illinois *Statutes*. The ranks to which this agreement apply are those outlined in the *Statutes* as being eligible for tenure.

The authority for the “W” appointment status is found in the University of Illinois *Statutes*, Article X, Section 1a, which provides that “Except under unusual circumstances evidenced by a special written agreement approved by the president of the University and the appointee, the tenure status for the academic ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor shall be as provided in this section.” At Urbana-Champaign, the President’s designee is the Chancellor, who in turn has delegated this authority to the Provost.

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A copy of the *Special Agreement* form, which shows the necessary approvals, is contained in Attachment 2. The special agreement should only be executed under exceptional circumstances and should not be used as a means of appointing a staff member on a temporary basis (year-to-year contracts).

The *Statutes* provide a notification period for assistant professors which, with careful planning on the part of departments, should cause no problems for those staff members employed on State funds. For those employed on non-State funds, there may be more of a problem in that grants may be terminated at any time and, therefore, a “W” form executed for a staff member paid from non-State funds may occasionally be justifiable. (It is seldom, if ever, appropriate for a “W” form to be provided for a staff member paid wholly or partially from State funds.)

A special agreement will not be approved unless sufficient justification is provided concerning the reason the staff member is being asked to waive his/her rights to tenure. **The execution of a “W” agreement for a staff member being paid on State funds for the reason of budgetary uncertainty is not acceptable.**

Advance consultation and approval from the Office of the Provost is required before a “W” appointment can be offered. Once that approval is received, the *Special Agreement* form, along with a statement of justification, should be submitted with the staff member’s other appointment forms.

### **Assistance**

Further questions concerning “Q” or “W” appointments should be directed to the Office of the Provost (333-6677).

### **Attachments**

Transmittal for Probationary (Untenured) Associate or Full Professors (“Q” Appointees)

Special Written Agreement to Accept Appointment and Reappointment for Definite Terms (“W” Agreement)

Sample letter to Faculty on Initial Term (“Q”) Appointment