ENGLISH DEPARTMENT POLICY ON INSTRUCTORS
(Revised February 15, 2001)

Policy on Recruitment, Retention, and Termination of Instructors

The minimum qualifications for an instructorship will be an M.A. degree in English or a closely related field and evidence of potential for excellence in teaching. The Department will always seek to hire the persons best qualified for the duties of the position in terms of education, experience, and personal characteristics. Although the minimum qualification for an instructorship is an M.A., the department and the LSU System prefer to hire applicants with terminal degrees. Three categories of full-time instructor appointments are possible in the Department of English. A person may progress from Instructor I to Instructor II and then to Instructor III. Promotion is based on a review of teaching, service, and professional development. All instructors will be appointed for terms of one year.

No Instructor I will ordinarily receive more than three consecutive full-time one-year appointments. The Instructor I is reviewed by the Freshman English Committee in the spring of his or her first year. The Department sees this review as preparation for the second year review. As such, the teaching portfolio, for example, is viewed as a working draft that the candidate will revise for the second year review. The first year review ordinarily consists of two classroom visits (one to a Freshman English class and one to a literature class; a third may be necessary) and a review of materials, including a teaching portfolio that includes syllabi, course assignment sheets, handouts, or any other material used in classes; representative student work (essays reflecting a range of grades, reports, letters) from each of the courses (not each of the sections) taught during the previous semester. Photocopies of papers and exams are sufficient.

Instructor II is ordinarily an intermediate status for persons who have completed at least two years at LSU, who have indicated a desire to make a career of lower-division teaching, and who have passed an initial departmental review. To attain the status of Instructor II, the Instructor I requests by November 15 in the second year of full-time teaching to be considered for successive reappointments as Instructor II. In the event of such application, a committee will review the candidate's performance in the spring of the second year and recommend either an appointment as Instructor II or a third and final year of appointment as Instructor I. If the Instructor I does not choose to be reviewed, then the third year is automatically the terminal year.

Instructor III (Career Instructor) is a rank for persons who desire to make a career of lower-division teaching. To attain Instructor III, the Instructor II requests by November 15 in the fifth year of teaching to be considered for successive reappointments as Instructor III. In the event of such application, a committee will review the candidate's performance in the spring of the fifth year and recommend either an appointment as Instructor III or a terminal appointment as Instructor II. Instructor II's who have passed this second review will be considered Career
Instructors by the Department. If the Instructor II does not choose to be reviewed, then the sixth year is automatically the terminal year.

Since the Department has chosen to make only a limited number of appointments to the Career Instructorship--approximately 40% of the persons at the rank of instructor--such appointments will be made only if the instructor (in the collective judgment of the tenured members of the faculty) has demonstrated excellence in classroom teaching and a readiness to accept the responsibility of service to the Department and to the University. At the beginning of the probationary period (defined as all the time in the instructor ranks before being promoted to Instructor III), the Department will reaffirm the criteria on which this judgment will be based, and during the probationary period the candidate will be evaluated according to procedures prescribed by the Department. Any sixth year appointment other than a terminal one will be accompanied by a commitment in writing by the Department to continue reappointing pending acceptable annual reviews. The commitment of the Department, of course, is to recommend the appointment; it cannot guarantee it, since only the Board of Supervisors can appoint.

College policy dictates that instructors cannot be considered for promotion to the rank of assistant professor; instructors may, however, apply for assistant professorships that the department advertises.

All the above procedures must be implemented within the larger framework of University, College, and Departmental policies against hiring our own Ph.D.'s or our own Ph.D. candidates in circumstances that could lead to tenure.

Criteria for Evaluation of Instructors

The most significant criterion of outstanding ability as an instructor is excellence in teaching.

Candidates must demonstrate their outstanding ability as instructors--in a range of courses appropriate to the instructor level or, with special depth, in a particular area of instruction such as ESL or Business or Technical Writing--by their classroom performance, in their teaching materials, and in their methods of evaluation.

The instructor should make clear the focus or point of each class; classroom activities should relate directly, clearly, and effectively to the course being taught (for example, to writing instruction or to the analysis of literature); the instructor should communicate clearly and should evoke student responses in order to lead engaging, effective class discussions; and to the extent possible, the instructor should make each class (and thus the course) stimulating as well as educational. Teaching materials should be appropriate to the course level and to the students being taught and should contribute to meeting course objectives. Corrections and comments on student writing should be correct, fair, and conducive to improving the quality of the student's work.

All instructors are expected to carry out their duties in a professional manner--meeting
classes punctually and regularly, grading written work promptly, maintaining scheduled office hours, and so on. Any instructor who does not—or who is unwilling to serve the Department, College, and University as appropriate (by serving on committees evaluating courses, textbooks, and syllabi and/or working at State Rally, for example)—will not be reappointed. But faithful performance of such routine duties coupled with merely competent teaching will not merit advancement to Instructor II or Instructor III.

The variety, depth, and quality of academic preparation, special training in language and rhetoric, fellowships and awards and scholastic honors (such as Phi Beta Kappa or Phi Kappa Phi), teaching experience elsewhere, and professional service are especially important criteria for initial appointment, since they give promise of excellent teaching here at LSU. For reappointment, however, they are distinctly secondary to the actual demonstration of accomplished excellence in teaching.

Procedures for the Reappointment of Instructors in the Department of English

A Screening Committee appointed by the Chair of the Department will review during the spring semester the performance of Instructors who have asked for promotion to the next rank. For instructors who apply for Instructor II, the Committee will recommend either continued annual appointments through the fifth year as Instructor II or a terminal appointment as Instructor I. (Reappointment to the Instructor II rank is dependent upon a favorable annual review and the availability of positions.) For Instructors undergoing the fifth-year review the Committee will recommend either promotion to Career Instructor or a terminal appointment as Instructor II.

The chair of the Screening Committee will request the following from all candidates:

(1) a copy of their teaching schedules;

(2) a teaching portfolio that includes a vita; a teaching philosophy, syllabi, course assignment sheets, handouts, or any other material they use in their classes that they would like the committee to review; representative student work (essays, reports, or letters reflecting a range of grades) from each of the courses (not each of the sections) they have taught during the previous semester(s). Photocopies of papers and exams are sufficient.

Candidates may also submit any other materials they believe would support their case. All such materials from the candidates must be in the hands of the Screening Committee chair by February 15. While the review is in progress, candidates should communicate any additional information to the Screening Committee through the Committee chair.

As soon as the candidates' files are assembled, members of the Screening Committee will arrange to visit their classes. In general, two different courses taught by the candidate will be visited by two different members of the committee. Occasionally, a third visit by a different member may be necessary.
The members of the committee who visit a candidate's class meeting will write an evaluation of that candidate based on the visit and on the material submitted by the candidate. The Screening Committee will then meet to discuss these preliminary evaluations, the first-year evaluations conducted by the staff, and student evaluations. These preliminary evaluations and other working papers remain in the possession of the Committee chair, who will destroy them when the review is complete.

Prior to the meeting of the Appointments Committee at which candidates are reviewed, the chair of the Screening Committee will make available to the Appointments Committee the following:

(1) the materials each candidate has supplied,

(2) student evaluations,

(3) a brief evaluation with reasons from each member of the Screening Committee recommending for or against reappointment, and

(4) a summary statement of the evaluation and recommendations of the Screening Committee as a whole.

This summary statement of the Screening Committee will be available to the candidates, and the candidate will be given seven working days in which to respond in writing to the summary statement before the meeting of the Appointments Committee. The summary statement may be revised following discussion by the Appointments Committee.

All departmental recommendations on the renewal of appointments are made by majority vote of the Appointments Committee and with a separate endorsement from the Department chair. All tenured members of the faculty should be involved in this process, unless excused by the Department chair for such circumstances as a leave of absence. After this final action, the chair of the Screening Committee will supply a written statement summarizing the committee's evaluation and recommendation to each candidate the Department has recommended for other than a terminal appointment. Candidates the Department has recommended only for a terminal appointment may also request such a summary statement, which will then become a part of their personnel files. The working papers of the Committee are not shown directly to the candidates; however, the chair of the Screening Committee will be available to discuss details with all candidates.

Instructor III's will continue to receive an annual evaluation based upon an annual report of teaching, service and professional development, and student evaluations.