

## **OVERARCHING POSITION DESCRIPTION DEPARTMENT CHAIRS, FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY**

**POSITION:** Department Chairs

### **TERM OF APPOINTMENT:**

An initial five (5) years with the potential for renewal following discussion with the Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FoMD), the length of the second term to be determined at the time of the second appointment and be dependent upon the needs of the program, the Faculty and the incumbent.

**REPORTING TO:** The Dean

**PURPOSE:** Reporting to the Dean of the Faculty, **the Department Chair** is charged with a complex, demanding role of providing the management and leadership necessary to enable successful academic endeavours in the areas of teaching, research and service. During the course of their term(s) as Chair, the incumbent has the ability to have direct impact on their Department and Faculty by working with colleagues to create and/or reaffirm the common vision of success. The Chair then uses their personal reputation to build trust and momentum to move the Department in this direction. Faculty members who take on this role have the opportunity to develop as academic leaders and make a direct contribution to the success of their Department, Faculty and the University.

### **MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES:**

Strategically Positions the Department for Success

1. Positions and represents the Department in such a way as to ensure that it is acknowledged internally and externally for its contributions.
2. Builds the image and reputation of the Department within its discipline so that it has standing not only within the Faculty and the University but also provincially, nationally and internationally.
3. Promotes strong partnerships which benefit the Department, Faculty and the University.
4. Integrates departmental goals with Faculty and University goals and missions.
5. Creates a departmental mission in alignment with the Faculty's.
6. Contributes to the implementation of the University's academic/strategic plan as well as the implementation of the FoMD Strategic Plan, § as applicable.
7. Develops a Departmental vision, through collaboration, in order to foster the Department's areas of strength, with a view to aligning with, or leading, future trends in the discipline.

## Overarching Position Description: Department Chair

8. Leads faculty and staff<sup>1</sup> in setting and maintaining academic standards/quality and goal-setting according to departmental priorities.
9. Works with faculty to plan, review and execute the Department's curriculum(a).
10. Exercises good judgment in the management of change and risk.

### Creates a Positive Working Environment

1. Works to build a cohesive Department by promoting a positive, supportive climate with good morale, cooperation and collegiality.
2. Builds commitment for the Department's vision by encouraging a culture of equity, diversity, respect and collaboration where everyone understands the vision and how they contribute to the Department's and Faculty's overall success.
3. Recognizes and acknowledges the contributions of all.

### Manages the Administration of the Department within the Parameters Established by the Faculty and University

1. Makes efforts to find, develop, acquire and fairly distribute the resources to fulfill the vision.
2. Prepares budget and planning documents annually, with faculty input into a transparent process and manages the budget. Adopts policies and procedures for the Department that ensure the appropriate stewardship of operating budgets and trust funds. Investigates over-expenditures and possible inappropriate uses of trust funds.
3. Builds consensus through broad faculty involvement in decision-making including priority-setting for resource allocation.
4. Ensures grant overheads are appropriately allocated within the Department.
5. Designs departmental processes and structures to ensure the smooth operation of the Department.
6. Through an inclusive consultation and decision-making process, is a leader in the academic planning process for the Department, initiating discussion, defining priorities, and developing and articulating the vision.
7. Ensures and exemplifies the professionalism appropriate for the discipline, including that for the areas of values, ethics, integrity and demonstrating a professional, collegial demeanour and competence.

---

<sup>1</sup> Depending upon the context, the term, "**staff**" may refer to academic and/or support staff positions. The Definition and Categories of **Academic Staff**, Administrators and Colleagues, are presented in the "Recruitment Policy (Appendix A)" within the UAPPOL Policies and Procedures (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Procedures/Recruitment-Policy-Appendix-A-Definition-and-Categories-of-Academic-Staff-Administrators-and-Colleagues.pdf>). The terms "faculty" or "faculty member" usually refer to Category A1.1 in that definition and are equivalent to "staff member" as defined in the Faculty Agreement. Other academic staff (e.g., Administrative Professional Officer [APO], Faculty Service Officer [FSO], Research Academic, etc) and Academic Colleagues (FoMD "Clinical Faculty") are also included in the above UAPPOL definition. The Definition and Categories of **Support Staff** included in the Non-Academic Staff Association Agreement, are presented in the UAPPOL "Recruitment Policy (Appendix B)" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Procedures/Recruitment-Policy-Appendix-B-Definition-and-Categories-of-Support-Staff.pdf>).

## Overarching Position Description: Department Chair

8. Builds trust through openness and transparency while making difficult decisions needed to move the Department forward.
9. Ensures, to the extent possible, the necessary support systems (e.g., space and infrastructure) are available to staff members.
10. Understands the legislative responsibilities of their position (e.g., FOIPP, safety, harassment, accommodation) and responds accordingly.
11. Understands the requirements of the University as written in University Policy and Agreements.
12. Ensures resources required for teaching (e.g., equipment) are maintained and enables applications for research resources and access to core research facilities.

## Maintains Good Internal and External Departmental Relationships

1. Models and fosters good communication (timely and sensitive, as appropriate) within the Department (e.g., to ensure an effective downward flow of information).
2. Builds effective relationships and advocates on behalf of the Department, as appropriate.
3. Provides strong intellectual leadership within a shared-governance structure.
4. Is available to faculty, staff and students and other learners.
5. Contributes to effective, collaborative relations with staff, student and postdoctoral fellows associations.
6. Represents the Department in dealings with the Dean and Central Administration.
7. Works to support the Faculty and the University as a whole (e.g., through participation on committees).
8. Seeks out opportunities for collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.
9. Deals with conflict between staff members as it arises.
10. Encourages intra- and trans-disciplinary collegial relationships.

## Develops and Evaluates Departmental Staff

1. Works to maintain and improve the performance of the Department by providing individuals with feedback and suggestions for improvement.
2. Promotes faculty and staff development including teaching workshops, the peer review of teaching, grant-writing and guidance in publishing and leads staff in setting and maintaining academic standards/quality.
3. Recognizes superior performance in addition to consistent contribution.
4. Ensures junior staff members are mentored/ coached and provided with the opportunities to succeed.
5. Ensures all members of the departmental staff (Support, APO, FSO and faculty) have their performance evaluated in a timely fashion.
6. Prepares any correspondence relevant to the career path of faculty (e.g., letters for promotion dossier).
7. Represents the faculty through the FEC process (i.e., tenure, promotion and incrementation).

## Plans for the Future of the Department

## Overarching Position Description: Department Chair

1. Contributes to the Faculty/University's academic plan.
2. Develops a departmental vision, through collaboration, in order to foster the Department's areas of strength and with a view to aligning with, or leading, future trends in the discipline.
3. Recruits high-calibre faculty and staff to positions that will support the vision into the future and that move the Department into emerging areas within the discipline.
4. Plans, develops and leads a strong team of faculty and staff who support the development and implementation of frameworks, policies and initiatives that foster a culture of excellence, innovation, collaboration, engagement, commitment, responsibility and accountability throughout the Department and into the Faculty.
5. Identifies and develops individuals with potential to serve in future academic leadership roles.
6. Treats others with dignity and respect and addresses issues fairly and objectively.

### Builds Academic Programming and Assigns Work Accordingly

1. Develops and maintains excellence in academic programming for undergraduate and graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and other trainees/learners.
2. Directs the development of novel undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral modules/courses/experiences in order to promote the disciplines encompassed by the Department.
3. Ensures graduate student recruitment and support are fairly administered for all faculty.
4. Establishes effective recruitment strategies to attract outstanding graduate students, ensures the availability of consistent graduate student funding, and develops and maintains the Faculty-wide standards for supervision of graduate students, including degree completion times.
5. Contributes to a high-quality learning environment for all learners.
6. Leads staff in setting and maintaining academic standards/quality.
7. Assigns teaching loads equitably while balancing the need to give appropriate time for research (ensures a pre-determined balance of research, teaching and service).
8. Promotes excellence and integrity in pedagogical activity, research and other scholarly activity, and fosters a climate that encourages faculty and staff to creatively identify and pursue excellence and innovation.

### Plays a Role in Public Relations and Fund Development to Support the Department

1. Fulfills the community relations and fund development role determined by the Faculty.
2. Works to increase funding support from international, federal and provincial agencies, while demonstrating resourcefulness and creativity in identifying alternative funding sources in collaboration with the Assistant Dean, Advancement, and the Vice-Dean, Research.
3. Establishes meaningful mechanisms for engaged scholarship with the community in the development of academic programming, research initiatives, and student mentorship, guidance and retention.
4. Builds an environment of collegiality in which faculty, learners and the broader community jointly participate in and benefit from the unique nature of the Department.

## Retains an Active Leadership Role in Original Scholarly Pursuits

- Maintains teaching and/or research activity, and, where applicable, engages in the practice of their profession, at a level sufficient to remain active in the discipline.

**For Chairs of Clinical Departments** (In addition to the Responsibilities listed above):

1. Influences, promotes, and supports the Strategic Plans of the University, the Faculty and Alberta Health Services (AHS)<sup>2</sup> Strategic Plans, as appropriate.
2. Ensures effective Departmental governance structure, taking into account the alignments between the Department, Faculty and AHS.
3. For Departments organized into Divisions, appoints Divisional Directors in compliance with the FoMD Guideline, "*Advisory Search and Selection Committee Membership for Departmental Divisional Directors.*"
4. Develops a Departmental strategy/strategic plan to include patient care with teaching and research in creating a tripartite mission for the Department, as applicable.
5. Oversees, promotes and improves the quality of patient care, teaching, education and research performed by members of the Departments of the University and AHS.
6. Develops and fosters co-operative relationships among the Department's members and with other University and AHS departments, faculty and staff.
7. Advocates for sufficient clinical and academic funding from the University and AHS to support the Departmental mission and through collaboration with local, regional, provincial and national funding agencies and foundations.
8. Ensures that sufficient funds are available to carry out the departmental mission. This may include working with the Faculty, any Departmental financial management committee and/or the Alternate Relationship Plan, or negotiations of alternate funding plans, Departmental tithing, etc.
9. Ensures a process to develop the careers of faculty and staff and to monitor the resulting career development, including clinical careers.
10. Mentors Clerkship Coordinators and Program Directors to assume leadership roles in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education Programs, respectively, while at the same time, realizing personal success in their Departmental and career responsibilities.
11. Ensures that all department members understand and manage compliance with the relevant legislation, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations, policies and procedures and ethical guidelines of the University and the Hospital(s) (AHS) in which they function.

**Liases With:**

- Other Department Chairs

---

<sup>2</sup> NOTE: The term "Alberta Health Services (AHS)" is used in this document to indicate the current providers of health services relevant to the FoMD and the term will be revised (and/or will be assumed to have been revised) if the designation of the provider of health services changes. When referring to AHS, the term is meant to include Covenant Health, as applicable.

Overarching Position Description: Department Chair

- Institute Directors
- Members of the Dean's Executive Committee (DEC)

**Direct Reports:**

- Administrative Professional Officer(s)
- Division Directors (as applicable)

-----



See link to Strategic Plan of the FoMD on the Faculty Home Page