

Proposal for a Professor of Instruction Track Spring 2026

The Lecturer-in-Discipline community has long been a critical part of Columbia University, actively contributing to teaching, advising and administrative efforts across campus. To recognize the crucial contributions of this group, the Office of the Provost has proposed for the review of the Faculty Affairs, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee a **three-tiered Professor of Instruction track that includes Assistant, Associate and Professor of Instruction ranks for current and future faculty in renewable, non-tenure-eligible positions.**

The current Lecturer-in-Discipline (LiD) structure at Columbia is a two-tiered track with progression from the LiD rank to the Senior Lecturer-in-Discipline (SLiD) rank.¹ Reviews occur in year 1 of counted service (Confirming Review), 3 (Developmental Review), 5 (Critical Review), and 7 (Major Review), when the promotion to SLiD in year 8 is possible, though not guaranteed. The Major Review is followed by continuing reviews, usually at four-year intervals.

The new proposed **Professor of Instruction** track remains non-tenure-track faculty appointment with a renewable stated term. What is new is that it would be comprised of the following three tiers:

- **Assistant Professor of Instruction:** Entry-level, requires PhD (or its professional equivalent e.g., JDs), a minimum of seven years of teaching before qualifying for a major review to be considered for promotion to the next rank of Associate Professor of Instruction. The major review for promotion must take place by the 8th year of service.
- **Associate Professor of Instruction:** Requires PhD (or its professional equivalent e.g., JDs), a minimum of eight years of teaching, and if the individual is an external hire, the passing of the major review must occur before the end of the first year of appointment.
- **Professor of Instruction:** Requires PhD (or its professional equivalent e.g., JDs), a minimum of 12 years of teaching, substantial evidence of not just pedagogical excellence but also academic leadership, and if the individual is an external hire, the passing of the major review must occur before the end of the first year of appointment.

¹ An “Associate in Discipline” title exists but is only used for those hired without PhDs and is not a formal part of the current promotional ladder for LiDs.

Reviews and Promotions: Prior to a major review in year 8 and promotion to Associate Professor of Instruction, Assistant Professors of Instruction are expected to be reviewed within years 1 of counted service (Confirming Review), 3 (Developmental Review), and 5 (Critical Review), just as LiDs currently are expected to complete.

Promotion criteria: Metrics for **promotion** of Professor of Instruction from one rank to the next are defined at the school level. Evidence of excellence in teaching, recognition in pedagogical expertise and promise and future trajectory, both in the classroom and as an academic leader, are typical metrics for evaluation. Faculty on this track are expected to pursue professional development and move from Assistant Professor of Instruction to Associate Professor of Instruction; schools are expected to support the professional development of faculty on this track. Should an individual not pass the major review for promotion, the school is expected to issue a letter of nonrenewal with a one-year notice period.

There is no absolute requirement for the progression from Associate Professor of Instruction to Professor of Instruction, though we highly recommend that schools provide the resources for professional development so that individuals can pass that promotional review.

In addition to the substantive reviews that are held to determine promotion to a higher rank, schools will continue to conduct **continuing reviews** at 5-year intervals (with either a recommendation for an additional term, or a recommendation for non-renewal) to ensure on-going pedagogical excellence. Review criteria for continuing reviews are determined at the school-level. If the review for promotion from Associate Professor of Instruction to Professor of Instruction occurs before five years pass after the promotion from Assistant Professor of Instruction to Associate Professor of Instruction, the review would count as a continuing review as well and there would be no need for another continuing review for another five years (assuming the promotion to Professor of Instruction is successful).

As this remains a non-tenure-track instructional appointment with a stated term, should the individual not pass the Confirming Review, Developmental Review, Critical Review, Major Review, or any continuing reviews, they would receive a letter of nonrenewal. Per the Faculty Handbook, a full-time nontenured faculty member whose appointment will not be renewed beyond its stated term is entitled to clear and unambiguous notice of nonrenewal in writing. The notice

must be given in advance of the expiration of their appointment along the lines stipulated in the [Faculty Handbook](#). The sole exception is when an Associate Professor of Instruction does not pass the promotional review to Professor of Instruction. In such cases, they can be permitted to remain at the Associate tier and continue to be evaluated with continuing reviews. However, we strongly encourage Schools to continue to support their pedagogical development so that they can move along the promotional ladder successfully.

Current full-time LiDs and SLiDs with renewable appointments who have been hired through an open search with full clearance will have the option of remaining in the LiD/SLiD track or transitioning to the Professor of Instruction track with their Dean's approval.² LiDs/SLiDs will have until the end of the following academic year, once the announcement of the new track is made, to decide whether to move. If they do transition, they would be appointed on a January 1 or July 1 appointment date. The transition from the lecturer structure to the Professor of Instruction track would be along the following lines: current LiDs would transfer to Assistant Professor of Instruction, while Senior LiDs would transfer to either the Associate or Full Professor of Instruction depending on years of experience and on meeting the qualitative metrics of the specific rank. For distinctions between the LiD/SLiD track and the Professor of Instruction track, please see appendix A. One notable difference, for example, is that the LiD/SLiD track allows for LiDs to pass a major review and not be promoted. For Assistant Professors of Instruction, if one passes the Major Review by year 8, one must be promoted.

New Special Instructional Faculty hires holding a PhD (or its professional equivalent e.g., JDs) with renewable appointments would generally be hired into the Professor of Instruction track at the appropriate rank. Those who are hired at the Associate and Full Professor of Instruction ranks would have to undergo an immediate "major" or advanced review at least by the end of the first year of their appointment.

Once the new track is established, the **Teaching Professor** title that was proposed by the Provost Office in 2023, and then, proposed and adopted by the Senate on November 17, 2023, would be changed to **Teaching Professor with Distinction**. This title would not be part of the promotional

² The request for the transfer will need to be submitted to the Dean's office, and once the Dean's approval is granted, submitted to the Provost Office for final approval.

track but would be an exceptional honor conferred by Schools to truly extraordinary and highly experienced members of the full-time non-tenure-track teaching faculty who are at the rank of Senior Lecturer in Discipline or Professor of Instruction. Its new name is meant to capture the exceptional honor of the title. The Office of the Provost recommends that Schools utilize a formal nomination process for the Teaching Professor with Distinction title that relies upon detailed dossiers with external recommendations, teaching awards, student letters, and faculty review. Schools should cap this number at 5% of their full faculty. Faculty who have already been nominated and selected for the current Teaching Professor title, would be automatically transferred to the new title of Teaching Professor of Distinction.

Appendix A

Table 1: Lecturer in Discipline/ Senior Lecturer in Discipline Track

LiD/SLiD Track	Typical Time in Rank	Review Schedule	Promotion Outcome	Appointment Terms
Lecturer- in-Discipline (LiD)	~7 years before Major Review	Year 1: Confirming Year 3 (or 2 in the A&S): Developmental Year 5: Critical Year 7: Major Review	May pass major review but promotion not guaranteed	Non-tenure-track appointment with stated term; renewable based on reviews
Senior Lecturer- in-Discipline (SLiD)	Indefinite; continuing reviews at 4- or 5-year intervals depending on School	Reviews every 4 years post-Major Review, or every 5 years in the A&S	Remain SLiD after promotion; no further promotion required	Non-tenure-track appointment with stated term; renewable with ongoing reviews

Table 2: Professor of Instruction Track

PoI Track	Typical Time in Rank	Review Schedule	Promotion Outcome	Appointment Terms
Assistant Professor of Instruction	~7 years before Major Review	Year 1: Confirming Year 3: Developmental Year 5: Critical By Year 8: Major Review	Must pass major review to be promoted; if not, receive letter of nonrenewal	Non-tenure-track appointment with stated term; failure to pass any review triggers nonrenewal with notice as specified in the faculty handbook
Associate Professor of Instruction	Minimum 4 years before next promotion consideration	Immediate Major Review within 1st year of appointment (if hired at this rank). Reviewed every 5 years (with 6th year as terminal year). For those individuals who do not pass the review, notice of non-renewal needs to be consistent with the schedule specified in the faculty handbook.	Promotion to Full is recommended but not required; failing reviews leads to nonrenewal	Non-tenure-track appointment; renewable with ongoing successful reviews
Professor of Instruction	Indefinite with continuing reviews at 5- year intervals	Immediate Major Review within 1st year of appointment (if hired at this rank). Reviewed every 5 years (with 6th year as terminal year) For those individuals who do not pass the review, notice of non-renewal needs to be consistent with the schedule specified in the faculty handbook.	No further mandatory promotion; failure of any review leads to nonrenewal	Non-tenure-track appointment; renewable with continued demonstrated excellence

Table 3: Track Comparison

LiD vs. PoI	Lecturer in Discipline/ Senior Lecturer in Discipline Track	Professor of Instruction Track
Rank	Lecturer-in-Discipline (LiD) → Senior Lecturer-in-Discipline (SLiD)	Assistant Professor of Instruction → Associate Professor of Instruction → Professor of Instruction
Typical Time in Rank	~7 years before major review for LiD; SLiD indefinite with 4-year reviews	Assistant: ~7 years before major review; Associate: ~4 years before next review; Professor: indefinite with ongoing reviews
Review Schedule	Year 1: Confirming Year 3 (or 2 in A&S): Developmental Year 5: Critical Year 7: Major Review then every 4 years (or 5 in the A&S)	Year 1: Confirming Year 3: Developmental Year 5: Critical by Year 8: Major Review (Assistant → Associate); then every 5 years
Promotion Outcome	Can pass major review but not be promoted (depends on school)	Must pass major review → mandatory promotion; failure at the major review = nonrenewal
Post- Major Review	SLiDs reviewed every 4 years; remain at rank indefinitely	Associates reviewed every 5 years; can be considered for Full but not required
Appointment Terms	Non-tenure-track appointment with stated term; renewable based on reviews	Non-tenure-track appointment with stated term; failure to pass any review triggers letter of nonrenewal with notice as specified in faculty handbook
Path for Existing Faculty	N/A (current structure)	Current LiDs → Assistant PoI Current SLiDs → Associate or Full PoI (based on experience & metrics)
Exceptional Honor	Teaching Professor (capped at 5% of faculty; formal nomination required)	Teaching Professor with Distinction (capped at 5% of faculty; formal nomination required)