Department Chair Resource Guide

A quick-reference handbook for department chairs.

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Full Resource Guide PDF

Department Chair Resource Guide-v4.pdf

Introduction from the Provost

Department chairs occupy one of the most important leadership roles at Arkansas State University. You are faculty members and academic leaders, but you are also mentors, advocates, problem-solvers, managers, and, on some days, the person everyone calls when they do not know who else to call. The work is broad, consequential, and not always easily captured in a job description.

I know that work firsthand. Having served as a department chair, I understand both the opportunities and the challenges that come with the position. Chairs are often where university policy meets the daily reality of academic life. You help recruit and develop faculty, manage programs and resources, address difficult personnel and student issues, support teaching and scholarship, build departmental culture, and make countless decisions that affect the people you lead and the students we serve.

The Department Chair Resource Guide exists to help you do that work well.

The guide brings together information, resources, and guidance that chairs need throughout the academic year. It will continue to evolve as the work of chairs evolves, and I hope it becomes a resource you return to when questions arise, when circumstances change, or when you simply need to know where to start.

Leadership requires judgment, relationships, knowledge of one’s discipline and faculty, an understanding of institutional context, a broad knowledge of standard academic practices, and sometimes the willingness to make a difficult decision when no policy can make it for you. The intention of this guide is to give you ready access to information, processes, and resources so that your judgment is informed and your time is spent leading rather than searching for answers.

More importantly, I hope this guide reflects how Academic Affairs and Research views the relationship between the Provost’s Office and our department chairs. We are partners in the academic work of this university. Chairs are closer than most administrators to the daily work of our faculty and students, and that perspective matters. I want you to ask questions and identify processes that are not working. I also expect us to move beyond identifying problems. We should bring forward ideas, help develop solutions, and be willing to reconsider familiar ways of doing things when there is a better way. That responsibility belongs to all of us, including the Provost’s Office.

Our expectations for our departments and programs should be high because our expectations for Arkansas State should be high. Excellent teaching, consequential scholarship, strong academic programs, meaningful faculty development, and exceptional student outcomes are not ambitions reserved for institutions somewhere else. Achieving them requires talented faculty and staff, good leadership, sound judgment, appropriate resources, and a willingness to continually improve how we do our work.

Thank you for accepting the responsibility of departmental leadership and for the service you provide to your faculty, staff, students, college, and university. The work is not always easy, but it matters enormously. My office and I look forward to doing it alongside you.

William P. McLean
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
Professor of Government, Law, & Policy
Arkansas State University

About This Guide

The Department Chair Resource Guide is a living resource and is updated as university policies, procedures, forms, and practices change. Whenever possible, the guide links directly to the authoritative university policy, procedure, form, or other source document. In the event of a discrepancy, the authoritative source document governs.

To report outdated information, broken links, or other needed corrections and to suggest resources or topics that would make the guide more useful, email Provost@AState.edu.

Chair Responsibilities, Leadership, & Departmental Culture

Effective leadership begins with a clear understanding of the full scope of your charge—what is expected, how authority is delegated, and the boundaries within which you are empowered to act in service to the university’s mission.

A department chair is the academic and administrative leader of a department, responsible for guiding its scholarly direction, supporting faculty and student success, and ensuring alignment with the mission of Arkansas State University. The chair manages resources, upholds academic standards, fosters collaboration, and addresses challenges with transparency and integrity. In the spirit of effective leadership, the chair balances vision with day-to-day stewardship—creating an environment where faculty can excel and students can thrive.

A-State Operating Procedures

Academic Affairs and Research Policies & Procedures

- 02-01---Patents
- 02-02---Misconduct in Research
- 02-03---Human Research
- 02-04---Faculty Replacement - Illness and Emergency
- 02-05---Extra Compensation for Faculty
- 02-06---Intellectual Property not subject to Patent
- 02-07---Departmental Challenge Exams
- 02-08---Residency Regulations
- 02-09---Reassignment of Faculty Workload
- 02-10---Key Provisions of Captioning & Accessibility
- 02-12---Endowed Positions Policy

Academic Affairs and R... | A-State Knowledge Base

For the most current information, consult the online Source Material at Operating Procedures | A-State Knowledge Base

Faculty Handbook

Refer to section I.G.7. Department Chairs (pg. 21-22)

View online source material:

Faculty Handbook | A-State Knowledge Base

Faculty Lifecycle: Hiring, Evaluation, and Mentorship

The most enduring impact of your leadership will be measured in the faculty you recruit, support, and develop—individuals whose teaching, scholarship, and service advance the academic reputation of Arkansas State University.

Academic Hiring Process

The academic hiring planning process occurs during the spring and summer months to ensure that faculty searches follow a standard, timely sequence aligned with best practices across higher education.

Planning and Approval Phase

1. Colleges complete and submit their hiring plans to the Office of the Provost at the conclusion of the spring semester.
2. The Office of the Provost reviews submissions and finalizes approvals in consultation with university leadership.
3. Approved hiring plans are returned to the deans at the conclusion of the summer term.

Communication and Search Preparation Phase

1. Deans share hiring approvals with department chairs.
2. Chairs communicate approvals to their departments, appoint representative search committees, develop position advertisements that reflect departmental needs, and work with Human Resources to post the ads in Taleo, as appropriate.

Search and Offer Phase

1. Search committees provide recommendations to the chair, who consults with the dean before extending a job offer to the selected candidate.
2. Chairs negotiate salary and position details in concert with the dean and finalize the offer.

Formal Offer and Appointment Phase

1. The chair submits the Letter of Appointment (LOA) to the dean for Academic Affairs and Research (AAR) approval.
2. AAR approves the LOA; the letter is then signed by the candidate, chair, dean, and AAR.
3. The department administrator routes the formal offer paperwork in Taleo for approval by AAR, Human Resources, and Budget.

Letter of Appointment Template

When creating letters of appointment for faculty hires, please utilize the provided templates, found in the Chairs Council shared files: LOA Templates and Information.

Ensure that you save a copy of the template before editing, then update the assurances and stipulations section to reflect what the department will be offering as there will be variation across campus.

Banner Security and Access

When access is required to Banner or related systems, the appropriate security request forms must be submitted. Instructions and forms are available on the AState Banner Security Knowledge Base. Please review the information carefully, as it outlines the different types of access available, the process for completing and submitting forms, and the approvals required.

Banner Finance/HR/TEM Security

Access to Banner Finance, Human Resources, or Travel and Expense Management (TEM) is requested through the Banner Finance/HR/TEM Security Request Form .

Important reminders when completing the form:

- **Complete the User Information section in full.** Include A-State ID, position title, department, and supervisor.
- **Indicate the individual being replaced, if applicable.** This helps copy existing access and expedites the process.
- **Provide as much detail as possible.** A thorough justification and clearly specified access needs ensure a smoother approval process.
- **Confirm that all required signatures and approvals are obtained** before submission to cpi-security@astate.edu.

Banner Student Security

Banner Student Security – Maintained by the Registrar's Office for Banner Student module access. FERPA training is required for employees who request access to student information. Please contact registrar@astate.edu for further assistance with Banner Student security.

Important reminders when completing the form:

- **Complete all fields in full.** Missing information may delay processing or approval.
- **Ensure that FERPA training has been completed** prior to submission. Access to student information cannot be granted without current FERPA certification.
- **Verify that all required signatures and approvals are included** before submitting the form to the Registrar's Office.

Common Access Needs for New Department Chairs

The following areas of access are commonly required when a new Department Chair is appointed. Keeping these in mind when completing Banner security request forms will help ensure that the chair has the tools necessary to perform administrative responsibilities effectively.

- **Home Department/Unit Org Number**
- **Banner Security Classes** (commonly requested):
    - BAN_FIN_ALL_ASU
    - BAN_FIN_APPR_ASU
    - BAN_FIN_BUD_INQ_ASU
    - BAN_FIN_EPRINT_DEPT_ASU
    - BAN_FORM_FUS_ASU
    - BAN_HR_ALL_ASU
    - BAN_HR_DEPT_MGR_ASU
    - BAN_STU_ALL_ASU
    - BAN_STU_CRS_V_ASU
    - BAN_STU_DS_SCHED_UP_ASU
    - BAN_STU_GRADE_V_ASU
    - BAN_STU_REG_DS_GEN_ASU
    - BAN_STU_REG_DS_HOLDS_UP_ASU
    - BAN_STU_REG_TEST_V_ASU
    - BAN_STU_REG_V_ASU
- **Finance Access**: All FOAPs (Fund–Organization–Account–Program) to which the chair must be attached for viewing, initiating, or approving transactions.
- **Travel**: Delegates designated to act on the chair’s behalf.
- **EPAF and Workflow**: Initiator and approver/supervisor access as required.

Human Resources - Hiring Managers Information

View the online source material:

- Human Resources | Hiring Managers

Faculty Handbook

Refer to sections:

II.F. Continuing Performance Evaluation (pg. 36)

II.G. Annual Performance Evaluation (pg. 36-37)

III. PRT, Post-Tenure Review, and Dismissal Policies and Procedures (all subsections) (Pg. 53- 86)

IV. Grievance Procedure (pg. 87-103)

V.B. Selection of Faculty and Library Staff (pg.105-107)

V.G. Graduate Faculty (pg. 111-113)

View online source material:

Faculty Handbook | A-State Knowledge Base

Helpful Information for the PRT Process

You can find the official PRT process in the **Faculty Handbook | A-State Knowledge Base** (section III) and the official PRT SharePoint site.

Below are unofficial internal documents created to assist in understanding the promotion and tenure process:

- Download the PRT Process Summary
- Required Materials to be provided to UPRTC: 6th Year Promotion/ Tenure

Human Resources – Training and Development Resources

View online source material:

- Human Resources | Training & Development

Performance Improvement Plans (PIP)

View online source material:

- Human Resources | Performance Improvement Plan

Institutional Integrity & Title IX

View online source material:

Institutional Integrity & Title IX | Astate Knowledge Base

Department chairs should be familiar with faculty reporting responsibilities and the resources available through the Office of Institutional Integrity & Title IX. The office provides guidance related to discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, retaliation, pregnancy and parenting, equal access, and other concerns affecting campus safety and the learning and working environment.

Human Resources - Offboarding Procedures

View online source material:

Payroll Services | Operating Procedures

Supporting Student Success & Academic Integrity

The success of our academic enterprise depends upon the quality of our advising and the rigor with which we uphold academic integrity; these responsibilities are central to safeguarding the value of an Arkansas State degree.

Centralized Academic Advising Model

View PDF:

Academic Advising Redesign Guidelines

Supporting Student Success & Academic Integrity

Faculty Handbook

II.C. Student Evaluation of Faculty (Pg. 35)

View online source material:

- **Faculty Handbook | A-State Knowledge Base**

Supporting Student Success & Academic Integrity

Student Handbook

Academic Misconduct (pp. 15–16)

Student Academic Grievance Procedure (pg. 19)

Student Rights Grievance Procedure (pg. 19–20)

View online source material:

- **Student Handbook | A-State Knowledge Base**

Curriculum, Assessment & Accreditation

Strong academic programs do not occur by accident—they are built through deliberate design, continuous assessment, and adherence to the standards that affirm the quality and relevance of our offerings.

Curriculum, Assessment & Accreditation

Faculty Handbook

II.M. Curriculum Changes (process and approvals for program/course adjustments) (Pg. 41-42)

View online source material:

- **Faculty Handbook | A-State Knowledge Base**

Undergraduate Bulletin

View online source material:

- Undergraduate Bulletins | A-State Knowledge Base

Graduate Bulletin

View online source material:

- Graduate Bulletins | A-State Knowledge Base.

Budgeting, Grants & Resource Oversight

Stewardship of departmental funds, external grants, and other resources requires accuracy, transparency, and alignment with university priorities to ensure the long-term viability of academic programs.

Budgeting, Grants & Resource Oversight

Faculty Handbook

V.M. Equity Salary Review (pg. 119-120)

V.N. Compensated Faculty Leave(pg.120-124)

V.O. Outside Employment (pg. 124-125)

View online source material:

- Faculty Handbook | A-State Knowledge Base

Human Resources – Training and Development Resources

View online source material:

- Human Resources | Training & Development

Research and Technology Transfer & Sponsored Programs Accounting

For the most current information, consult the online Source Material at Research & Technology Transfer | A-State Knowledge Base.

View online source material:

- *Research & Technology Transfer | For Researchers Interacting with RTT (Pre-Award)*
- Faculty Research Award Committee | Frequently Asked Questions

Operational Management - Scheduling, Staffing, & Records

Efficient scheduling, equitable staffing, and accurate records management support the department’s teaching, research, and service missions while ensuring compliance with institutional policy.

Faculty Handbook

II.B.1. Teaching Load (Pg. 26-27)

II.B.2. Overloads (Pg. 27-28)

II.B.3. Reassignment of Faculty Workload–Research, Creative (Pg. 28-30)

II.E. Summer School Appointments (Pg.35 - 36)

II.F. Continuing Performance Evaluation – Pg. 36

II.G. Annual Performance Evaluation (Include II.G.1. and II.G.2.) – Pg. 36- 37

II.H. Schedules of Classes – Pg.40

V.P.2.a. Faculty Replacement–Illness and Emergency – Pg. 127

View online source material:

- Faculty Handbook | Astate Knowledge Base

Finding University People, Offices & Resources

With the transition to A-State's new website, the former A–Z Index is no longer available. The following resources can help faculty and staff locate university personnel, offices, contact information, services, and other commonly used resources.

Faculty, Staff & Office Directories

Faculty & Staff Directory

Campus Offices Directory

University Resources & Services

Faculty & Staff Resources: A central starting point for commonly used employee resources, including academic calendars, teaching and instructional support, university policies, forms, Human Resources, and other faculty and staff services.

A-State Knowledge Base: Access university procedures, instructional guides, technical support information, and departmental resources. The Knowledge Base includes information maintained by various university offices and departments.

Pack Portal: Access university systems, applications, announcements, and other resources available to A-State faculty and staff.

Campus Locations

Campus Maps & Directions: Campus maps and directions to university buildings and facilities can be accessed through the footer of the A-State website.

Human Resources & Payroll – EPAF Resources

View online source material:

- Payroll Services | EPAF
- Payroll Services | EPAF Guides

Knowledge Base Best Practices

View source material:

Knowledge Base Guide

A-State Operating Procedures

View online source material:

- Academic Affairs | Operating Procedures

Office of the Provost - Operating Procedures | Academic Integrity

View online source material:

Academic Affairs | Academic Integrity

Office of the Provost - Operating Procedures | Provost's Inclement Weather

ASU System | Inclement Weather Operating Procedure

During periods of inclement weather, the Office of the Provost at Arkansas State University asks the A-State community to be flexible and responsible regarding classes and assignments.

In the Event the University remains open

All classes will continue as scheduled.

Online Instruction and Power or Connectivity Issues

In the event of power or connectivity issues, faculty should be prepared to allow extra time as necessary for online coursework.

Commuter Students

Commuter students are encouraged to use good judgment in deciding whether to drive to campus during inclement weather. Student safety is important to A-State, but we cannot account for the local circumstances of every student when a decision to open or close the university is made.

Student Communication Responsibility

When the decision is made not to travel to campus under this policy, it is the responsibility of the student to immediately contact each professor upon return to explain the circumstances and to determine the need to complete any missed assignments.

Missed Assignments and Coursework

Students who are not able to safely travel to campus are responsible for all missed assignments during inclement weather within a time frame to be determined by the professor. When notified by a student that they are unable to safely commute, professors are asked to honor the absence as excused and not impose any attendance penalty.

Faculty Cancellation

If a faculty member cannot travel and cannot conduct class, they should alert their chair/dean as soon as possible and notify students of changes.

In the Event the University is Closed

Face-to-Face Courses

When the university is closed due to inclement weather, all face-to-face classes are cancelled.

To remain in compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Higher Learning Commission, and Arkansas Division of Higher Education course modality definitions, faculty cannot change the modality of their face-to-face classes to online delivery due to inclement weather. Only classes originally designated for online modality can continue during inclement weather closures.

Online Instruction

During times of university closure, online courses continue as usual. In the event of power or connectivity issues, faculty should be prepared to allow extra time as necessary for online coursework.

In the Event the University Opens Late and or Closes Early

As a reminder to faculty and students, on days with delayed opening, “all academic classes regularly scheduled to begin prior to the delayed opening time will be cancelled and will not meet”. Similarly, on days with early dismissal, “the University will cease all academic classes and regular business operations at a publicly announced time. In such an event, all remaining day and evening classes will be cancelled after a specified time.”

Inclement Weather Related Announcements and Updates

Regarding inclement weather alerts, Arkansas State reminds all students that official announcements will be made only through official university communications. The official university homepage, AState.edu, is supplemented by the verified university social media accounts -- on Facebook (Facebook.com/ArkansasState) and X (formerly Twitter) (@ArkansasState).

Email communication for emergency and weather alerts is provided to the official AState.edu issued faculty and staff or student accounts. Individuals who have signed up for text alerts will also receive notices of opening and closures.

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Office of the Provost - Operating Procedures | Volunteer Memorandum of Understanding

A Volunteer Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be completed before an individual begins providing volunteer services on behalf of the department or university.

Volunteer candidates should first complete the appropriate vetting and approval process required by the department. Once approved, the department should submit the applicable Volunteer MOU documentation.

Because volunteer roles and requirements vary across campus, each department may maintain its own Volunteer MOU form and approval process. If your department does not have an established Volunteer MOU form or process, please contact the Office of the Provost for assistance.

Chair Evaluation & Continuity

Strong departments are built to last; regular evaluation of leadership performance and thoughtful succession planning protect the momentum you have worked to build and ensure a stable future for the department.

Faculty Handbook

II.G. Annual Performance Evaluation (pg. 36-37)

View online source material:

- Faculty Handbook