



## A Primer on Drexel Faculty Rank for Students

Students are understandably often unclear on the different titles that faculty have. While title is not always an indicator of a person's status in their field, rank is a rough indicator of their level of accomplishment. Just be aware that the same titles can mean somewhat different things in different schools and colleges. In all cases, use your judgment and have a conversation with potential letter writers to make sure they are an appropriate choice given what you are applying for.

Drexel full-time faculty are either Tenure-Track/Tenured or "Teaching" faculty (not tenure-track).

**Tenure** is a system by which faculty with a significant track-record and reputation for excellence in their field are awarded continuing employment at the University in order to promote stability, freedom, and professional development.

**Tenure-track and tenured faculty** have ranks. They can be (in ascending order) Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or (full) Professor. Promotion is based on their distinguished and on-going record of research, teaching, and service to the university.

Promotion decisions are independent of tenure, though at Drexel these often occur concurrently at the point of promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor. Department heads, chairs, deans will generally always be tenured faculty.

The main responsibility of **Teaching Faculty** is, of course, to teach (as opposed to conduct research). Teaching Faculty can be appointed to similar rank levels. These are, in ascending order of rank: Instructor or Lecturer, Assistant Teaching/Assistant Clinical Professor; Associate Teaching/Associate Clinical Professor; (full) Teaching or Clinical Professor. Promotion is based on evidence of excellence in teaching, service, and professional development.

In addition, some of your professors may not be full-time at Drexel. They could be **Adjunct** faculty, which means that they teach at Drexel on a quarterly contract, or other **part-time faculty** with annual contracts. In these cases, their primary professional lives are generally elsewhere. This can be an excellent perspective for non-academic applications.

**Academic Advisors.** In most, though not all, Drexel schools, advisors are generally professional staff rather than faculty. Depending on what you are applying for, academic advisors may or may not make appropriate references. Same holds true for various program staff. The more competitive and academic the opportunity, the more likely you are to want faculty references. If you're unsure, ask.

**Graduate students.** In general, graduate students are not considered appropriate references for competitive opportunities because they don't yet have the depth or breadth of experience to speak knowledgeably about how your skills and dispositions compare to others at your level and to assess your likely potential for outstanding success in your field.