



# EXTENSION

## Extension Faculty Affiliate Program: Framework and Guidelines

### Purpose

The OSU Extension Faculty Affiliate Program is designed to strengthen interdisciplinary connections across OSU and expand the reach of our shared land-grant mission through collaboration. The program fosters partnerships between Extension professionals and faculty in colleges beyond those with formal Extension appointments (currently, Agriculture, College of Education and Human Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine), leveraging diverse expertise to address complex challenges facing Oklahoma families, individuals, businesses and communities.

### Extension's Mission and Role

OSU Extension (Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service is the formal agency name) helps Oklahomans solve local issues and concerns, promote leadership and manage resources wisely. As part of a national Extension system established in 1914 by the Smith-Lever Act supported by federal funds [through USDA's National Institute on Food and Agriculture](#), OSU Extension fulfills its mission with and through personnel at local/area/district and state levels supported by county, state and federal funds as well as grants and contracts. Extension focal areas include 4-H youth development, agriculture and natural resources, community and rural development, family and consumer sciences, and community health. Annual local program advisory committee meetings inform plans of work and ensure that Extension is relevant in communities throughout the state. Our programs and events deliver timely research-based information to stakeholders through many different outlets, from local in-person consultations to fact sheets to digital formats, including our [website](#).

### Goals

- **Enhance collaboration:** Connect campus-based scholars with Extension educators to co-create and deliver research-based programs that benefit communities statewide.
- **Promote engaged scholarship:** Support faculty in applying their disciplinary expertise through outreach, translational research, and community partnerships.
- **Increase visibility:** Broaden awareness of Extension's role across the university and highlight its potential as a platform for transformation of communities, businesses, families and individuals.

- **Leverage resources:** Stimulate interdisciplinary projects that attract external funding and amplify institutional impact.
- **Capacity building:** Extension benefits greatly from the contributions of volunteers, particularly in 4-H youth development, Master Gardener and Oklahoma Home and Community Education programs. Affiliates would add more skills and experiences to Extension offerings.

### **Benefits to Faculty Affiliates**

Faculty Affiliates gain meaningful professional advantages while advancing OSU's land-grant mission. The program is designed to add value to faculty careers by amplifying the reach, impact, and visibility of their scholarship without changing their primary appointment. As an Extension Faculty Affiliate, participants will:

- Expand the impact of their scholarship statewide. Affiliates gain access to Extension's trusted statewide infrastructure, including educators, specialists, and community partners in all 77 Oklahoma counties, providing an established platform to pilot, scale, and sustain research-informed programs.
- Strengthen promotion, tenure, and annual review materials. Extension engagement generates documented evidence of applied research, outreach, and community impact, elements increasingly valued in faculty evaluation. Upon request, Extension leadership will provide letters of support and documentation describing the scope, reach, and outcomes of affiliate contributions.
- Enhance competitiveness for external funding. Affiliates may help develop or join interdisciplinary proposal teams that leverage Extension's community presence. Extension is often an asset for broader impacts, engagement plans, and implementation strategies in federal, foundation, and state grant proposals. Affiliates are also eligible for seed funding opportunities when available.
- Increase visibility and professional recognition. Affiliates receive formal recognition as an Extension Faculty Affiliate, including inclusion in Extension directories and communications, and recognition at the annual Extension Awards luncheon.
- Join a cross-disciplinary community of engaged scholars. The Affiliate program connects faculty across colleges and disciplines who share an interest in translating research into practice and addressing complex challenges facing Oklahoma's people, communities, and industries.
- Access professional development and collaborative opportunities. Affiliates are invited to Extension professional development events, networking opportunities,

and collaborative initiatives that support engaged scholarship and translational research.

- Engage flexibly and strategically. Participation is scalable and adaptable to faculty interests and availability. Affiliates may focus on a single project or an evolving area of collaboration, aligning Extension engagement with existing research, teaching, or service priorities.

## **Eligibility**

Faculty from any college, school, or academic unit in the Oklahoma State University system who have an interest in transformative work built on community engagement and informed by applied research with the potential for statewide impact may apply. Tenure-track, career track, clinical, and professional-track faculty are eligible as are research or other staff with relevant expertise.

## **Appointment and Term**

- **Duration:** Appointments are for three years, renewable upon mutual agreement.
- **Affiliation:** This is an honorary and collaborative designation, not a change in employment status.
- **Selection:** Applications are reviewed by the Extension Leadership Team in consultation with relevant program leaders or associate directors.

## **Expectations**

Affiliates are expected to:

- Engage in collaborative projects with Extension educators and specialists.
- Participate in Extension-sponsored activities such as professional development events, relevant conferences, applied research efforts, or community workshops.
- Share expertise through appropriate venues, including but not limited to in-person in-service training, webinars, mentoring, or co-authored publications.
- Contribute to advancing Extension's strategic priorities, including but not limited to rural prosperity, health, youth development, workforce and community vitality.
- Provide a brief annual report or summary of activities and outcomes to the appropriate program leader: Ag and Natural Resources, Community Economic Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, Community Health, and/or 4-H Youth Development.

Level of engagement will vary depending on faculty interests and time availability.

## **Application Process**

Interested faculty should submit a brief application that includes:

1. A one-page statement of interest describing how their expertise aligns with Extension's mission and how they hope to collaborate.
2. A current CV or biosketch.
3. Description of a proposed project or area of focus.

Applications will be accepted annually (or on a rolling basis) and reviewed by the Extension Leadership Team (Associate Vice President plus District Directors and Program Leaders). Selected affiliates will receive a welcome letter and orientation materials.

## **Program Coordination**

The program will be coordinated through the office of the Associate Vice President for Extension, which will:

- Facilitate connections between Extension Affiliates and Extension specialists and educators.
- Host an annual networking and idea-sharing event.
- Maintain a directory of Extension Affiliates and areas of expertise.
- Track outcomes and success stories to report institutional impact.

## **Evaluation and Impact**

Success will be measured by:

- Number and diversity of participating colleges/units.
- Collaborative projects, grants, or publications resulting from the program.
- Documented community impacts or engagement outcomes.
- Faculty and Extension staff satisfaction and feedback.

## **Example Areas of Collaboration**

- **Education & Human Sciences:** Family well-being, nutrition, financial literacy, rural mental health, youth development, physical well-being.
- **Engineering & Technology:** Smart agriculture, broadband access, environmental resilience, fire prevention/protection.

- **Business & Entrepreneurship:** Small business development, economic vitality, workforce readiness.
- **Arts & Sciences:** Civic engagement, youth development, environmental education, AI.
- **Health Sciences:** Rural health access and availability, telehealth, public health partnerships.
- **Veterinary Medicine**