



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Guidelines for the Appointment, Reappointment and Promotion of Research Scientist Non-Tenure Track Faculty Members

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Responsible University Office:
Faculty Affairs | Professional Development | Diversity

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Scope

IU School of Medicine:

Non-Tenure Scientist Track Faculty

Department chairs

Regional Campus Deans

Executive Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development (EAD)

Assistant Director, Faculty Systems

Background

The need arose from two general problems. First, those academic units which have major research projects requiring highly-trained research specialists on a full-time basis found it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain researchers for these positions because of Indiana University's lack of a defined career ladder structure and reward system for non-faculty researchers who hold the doctorate. With major universities (especially those with

the largest total research and development expenditures) adopting systems of research ranks for such persons, the university's competitive recruitment situation had become more difficult. Indiana University's capacity for serving the scientific community and other clienteles (e.g., industry, education, governmental agencies) depends in part on being able to maintain facilities and organizations, which are staffed by stable, well-qualified cadres of research personnel.

Second, the university's need to define and assure career ladder opportunities to full-time research employees is in keeping with affirmative action policies. Various university committees had repeatedly found the university's policies concerning research associates inadequate for recruitment, retention, and the evaluation of salary inequities and had recommended a variety of corrective actions.

This policy continues to be reviewed and revised in order to better reflect and recognize the contributions of research scientist faculty to collaborative team science and to advancing the research mission through service, which facilitates the research of others and/or supports the long-term sustainability of research programs.

Categories

I. Faculty

- a. A three-rank system was created for those individuals who typically hold a doctorate or terminal degree, have postdoctorate experience (or its equivalent) and who are employed by Indiana University for strictly research responsibilities. Per [ACA-20](#), the following rank codes and titles are used:
 - Assistant Scientist or Assistant Research Professor
 - Associate Scientist or Associate Research Professor
 - Senior Scientist or Senior Research Professor
- b. Through the use of 'Special Titles' provision of [ACA-12](#), IUSM was approved in 2005 to confer the 'Research Professor' titles to those individuals in the scientist/scholar track who possess the unique characteristics and professional responsibilities that make the awarding of this title valuable in enhancing their ability to contribute to the IUSM research mission.
- c. An assistant research professor is equivalent to an assistant scientist; an associate research professor is equivalent to an associate scientist, and a senior research professor is equivalent to a senior scientist. Many other institutions that utilize the research professoriate find that it enhances the institution and is beneficial to the individual faculty member when applying for research funding.
- d. Those scientists holding research professor titles at any rank will be required to show excellence in research (which includes service to the research mission) when applying for promotion as indicated below.
- e. The three-rank system is regarded as a career ladder framework, with

appropriate policies and procedures for appointment, annual review, and promotion.

- f. The creation of positions takes place under procedures administered through academic units by the Dean of the Faculties of each campus and is further subject to the policies, rules, and procedures of the Campus Affirmative Action Plan as administered by the Affirmative Action Officer.
- g. The policies and procedures of the University Affirmative Action Plan apply in determining eligibility for any of the research ranks and for determining eligibility of a person holding a research rank for any other university appointment.

II. Other Academic Appointees

- a. The title of Research Associate is limited to those research personnel who are not qualified for a research rank, but whose positions call for full-time research under the supervision of a faculty member or a person holding a research rank. Research associates are not eligible for promotion to a research rank (see page 35 of the [IUPUI Faculty Guide](#))
- b. Persons working at Indiana University as postdoctoral fellows are designated as Postdoctoral Fellows (see [IUSM Postdoctoral Policy](#))

Guidelines

I. Qualifications for Rank

The qualifications for each of the three research ranks are roughly equivalent to those set forth in the IU School of Medicine Standards of Excellence in Research. Typically a candidate for the rank of Assistant Scientist will hold the terminal degree in his or her discipline and, in some fields, have at least one year of successful postdoctoral research experience...

- a. Assistant Scientist or Assistant Research Professor
 - i. Typically, a candidate for this rank will hold the terminal degree in his or her discipline and, in some fields, have at least one year of successful postdoctoral research experience.
 - ii. A person at this rank will be fully capable of original, independent research work, independent contributions to a collaborative research team, and/or facilitating the research of others through service efforts, and often works under the direction of a senior faculty member or an Associate Scientist or a Senior Scientist.
- b. Associate Scientist or Associate Research Professor
 - i. A candidate for this rank will have begun to establish a national reputation through sustained productivity, high quality published work, and documented impact on the success of a research program.
 - ii. He/she will demonstrate the ability to carry out independent projects of his or her own devising, will be an independent contributor to a collaborative research team, and/or will provide

service to the research mission that yields significant impact on the growth, sustainability, and/or national reputation of a research program.

- iii. Normally a person will have achieved a minimum of three years of successful research as reflected in published work in refereed sources before attaining or being appointed to the rank of Associate Scientist.
- c. Senior Scientist or Senior Research Professor
 - i. A Senior Scientist will have shown a career of continued growth in scholarship which has brought a national or international reputation as a first-class researcher who has made substantial contributions to his or her discipline, to a research team, and/or provided service to the research mission which has resulted in documented, significant, and sustained impact on the overall success of a research program.

II. Assessing Independence

- a. In assessing independence in the context of research scientist faculty, the degree to which a faculty member independently directs the research and its processes should be assessed (e.g., design/methodology, data collection, data analyses, writing and dissemination).
- b. Although this can take the form of serving as a principal or co-principal investigator or project director on funded research projects, independence and research autonomy may also be demonstrated for specific components of the research project or process without an official leadership designation.
- c. This does not preclude collaborations and/or consultations with colleagues and peers, but does entail the research scientist having the authority to make critical decisions related to the research design and implementation.
- d. At its highest levels, independence may also include providing intellectual leadership of a core, center, or unit.

III. Service

- a. A research scientist's service to the research mission can take a variety of forms,
 - i. such as leadership of an essential research core
 - ii. substantive program management roles (e.g., project design, project recruitment, report production)
 - iii. performing integral administrative functions (e.g., budget management; recruitment and supervision of personnel; and grant and contract oversight)
 - iv. and may also include external activities that directly support the mission of the research program such as representing the program at meetings, committees, conferences, or outreach efforts to relevant organizations and agencies.
- b. These research-focused service activities are considered in promotion decisions to the extent that they have a documented, significant impact on the outcome of a program (or programs) of research.

IV. Promotion

- a. Promotion in rank will be considered by following procedures comparable to those for librarians and tenure track faculty.
- b. Research is generally the only applicable area of responsibility, however, service to the research mission is also taken into consideration as part of this overall assessment of research activity.
- c. Some research scientist faculty members also hold part-time professorial title, in which case teaching would also be applicable.
- d. Criteria for promotion are detailed in the IUSM Standards of Excellence documents.

V. Fringe Benefits

- a. Retirement Plan
 - i. Persons appointed full-time to one of these non-tenure track ranks are eligible for enrollment in the same retirement programs as provided for other faculty and librarians.
- b. Insurance
 - i. Persons holding one of these non-tenure track ranks will participate in the same university life insurance plan as provided for other faculty and librarians.
 - ii. Health insurance is available to persons holding these ranks, at their option, with the university paying a portion as with other faculty and librarians.
- c. Leave of Absence
 - i. Persons holding any of these non-tenure ranks are eligible for leaves of absences as detailed in school and university policies with the exception that they are not eligible for sabbatical leaves.
- d. Vacation
 - i. Persons appointed to any of these non-tenure ranks for a 12 month period are entitled to a one month vacation as detailed in the policy on vacations for all other faculty and librarians.
 - ii. Vacations are approved by the chair of the department or director of the unit or his/her designee as applicable for other 12-month faculty.

VI. Personnel Policies

- a. Appointment
 - i. The chair of the department or director of the unit in which a scientist's project is located will initiate recommendations for the establishment of new positions.
 - ii. These recommendations will be reviewed and acted upon by the Dean of the School of Medicine, the IUPUI Office of Equal Opportunity, and the IUPUI Dean of the Faculties Office.
 - iii. Assistant Scientists normally will be on one-year, renewable appointments subject to annual reviews by the chair, director, or his/her designee and to the assurance of funding.
 - iv. Associate Scientists and Senior Scientists may be appointed for periods of more than one year, depending on the nature of the research missions to which they are assigned, their responsibilities, and funding prospects.

- v. Persons holding research ranks do not teach, except on a released-time basis and an appointment to a part-time rank approved by the Dean of the Faculties.
 - vi. Should a faculty member holding a scientist appointment seek transfer to a tenured or tenure track appointment, the transfer will be considered as a new appointment requiring the same review expected of other new tenure track appointees.
 - 1. A new search will not be required if the applicant for a transfer was initially appointed through an approved affirmative action search for a tenure track position.
 - vii. Persons holding tenure track rank are eligible for consideration for change in appointment to a non-tenure track scientist rank provided such change is in the best interest of the missions of the department, the school, and the university.
- b. Voting Rights
- i. Individuals holding scientist ranks are recognized as voting members of the School of Medicine faculty.
- c. Termination
- i. The minimum notice of termination is one pay period, consistent with policy for all non-tenure track/non-clinical track academic appointees

Related Information

[ACA-20 Regulation of Research Appointments](#)

[ACA-12 General Provisions Regarding Academic Appointments](#)

[IUSM Postdoctoral Policy](#)

[IUSM Standards of Excellence](#)

History

Effective February 7, 1981, the President and Board of Trustees of Indiana University approved the establishment of faculty level non-tenure track appointments for full-time research specialists (see [ACA-20: Regulation of Research Appointments](#)).

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All revisions approved by Faculty Steering Committee and IUSM Executive Committee.