

Research Ranks at Indiana University

BL-ACA-A5

About This Policy

Effective Dates:
03-18-1980

Last Updated:
04-02-2024

Scope

All research ranks on the Bloomington campus.

Policy Statement

A. Justification of Research Faculty Appointments

Indiana University’s capacity for serving the scientific community and other clienteles (e.g., industry, education, government agencies) depends in part on its ability to attract, retain, and support active, innovative, and successful research faculty. Research faculty play a crucial role in the campus’s ability to produce new knowledge, train its students, and attract extramural funding. Academic units that have major research projects requiring highly qualified research specialists on a full-time basis may justify research appointments as essential to a unit’s research/creative activity, teaching, and service missions.

Care should be taken to make appointments in the appropriate classification. Such appointments require written justification that will be reviewed prior to approval at the campus level. The Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs shall have the final decision on whether a particular appointment is appropriate.

B. Qualifications for Rank

Research ranks constitute the five sets of titles articulated below. Sets II.B.1-3 are considered research faculty. The qualifications for the research faculty ranks should be roughly equivalent to those set forth in the areas of research for tenure-track faculty.

1. Assistant Research Scientist, Assistant Research Scholar, or Assistant Research Professor

A candidate for the rank of **Assistant Research Scientist/Assistant Research Scholar/Assistant Research Professor** would have completed the terminal degree in their discipline and, in some fields, typically have at least one year of successful postdoctoral research experience. A person at the rank of Assistant Research Professor would conduct original, independent research and/or creative activity but may initially work under the direction of a senior faculty member. A person at the rank of Assistant Research Scientist/Scholar will primarily support the research/creative activity of other faculty members.

2. Associate Research Scientist, Associate Research Scholar, or Associate Research Professor

A person at the rank of **Associate Research Scientist/Associate Research Scholar/Associate Research Professor** would have begun to establish a national or international reputation of scholarship. Associate Research Professors should have a growing body of original, independent research/creative activity. Associate Research Scientists/Scholars will typically have a reputation based primarily on collaboration with others and/or furthering the work of a campus research unit.

3. Senior Scientist, Senior Scholar, or Research Professor

A **Senior Research Scientist/Senior Research Scholar/Research Professor** would have shown a career of continued growth in scholarship which has brought a national or international reputation

as a researcher who has made substantial contributions to their discipline and/or research unit. The expectation is that Research Professors are capable of sustained extramural support.

C. Appointment and Promotion

For Assistant, Associate, and Senior research faculty (sets of titles 1-3 above), appointment will follow the same procedures as for tenure-track faculty. Promotion in rank involves a campus-level procedure. Promotion, criteria, and dossiers are prepared by the research faculty's department or project unit and reviewed by the same review bodies, administrators, and advisory committees at the school and campus levels as those used for other faculty. See B16-2024.

When considering promotion recommendations for research faculty, the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs should ensure that the Campus Research Promotion Advisory Committee has members holding the rank of Senior Scientist/ Senior Scholar.

Postdoctoral Scholars are not eligible for campus-level promotion but may be appointed to the promotable research ranks through a school-internal process and VPFAA approval. Because Research Associates have a single rank, they are not eligible for campus-level promotion within the research ranks. Nevertheless, their unit heads should ensure that Research Associates have sufficient opportunity to advance their careers through, for example, changes/expansions in duties and responsibilities and appropriate compensation.

D. Personnel Policies

1. Persons holding research ranks may have funded projects in multiple units. Nevertheless, one unit should be designated as the faculty member's primary unit, similar to a "tenure home" for tenure-track faculty. The head of that primary unit (e.g., a department chair or an institute director) initiates recommendations for the establishment of new positions, advertising plans, appointment, renewals of appointment, and recommendations for promotion. These recommendations are reviewed and acted upon by the dean of the appropriate academic unit and by the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs.

Associate Scientists/Associate Scholars/Associate Research Professors and Senior Scientists/Senior Scholars/Research Professors should normally be appointed for periods of more than one year, depending upon the nature of their research/creative activity trajectories, their

2. responsibilities, and funding prospects. It should be the practice of the University to provide optimal conditions of job security to research faculty, including the use of extended and open contracts, as funding permits.

3. Except for those persons holding research ranks who have been granted "research tenure"*** (see II.D below), which carries a one-year termination period, the minimum notice of termination shall be the normal pay period. The University should make efforts to provide more advance notice whenever possible.

4. Persons holding research ranks do not teach, except on a released-time basis and on an appointment to an appropriate limited-term faculty rank approved by the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs. While research faculty are not evaluated on teaching, teaching assignments in support of research and creative activity should be included in annual evaluations.

5. Persons holding research ranks would not be eligible for consideration for tenure-line faculty rank, except as successful applicants responding to a normal, advertised search along with other candidates under established procedures. Persons holding tenure-line faculty ranks are similarly not eligible for consideration for research faculty ranks, except as successful applicants responding to a normal, advertised search along with other candidates under established procedures.

E. Research Tenure

In view of the number of research projects in effect in the whole University program, and to afford some employment security to the many individuals concerned in carrying out those projects, the following policy, designated as "Research Tenure," has been adopted. It is recommended:

1. That it be recognized that, because of their expectations of long continuance, certain research projects or units/institutes with continuing sources of funding shall be designated as projects or units/institutes in which “research tenure” can be achieved.

That the directors of such projects and/or the head(s) of the units/institutes be permitted to recommend, when they deem it proper—but not before the person to be recommended has served on the project or in the institute for at least a year— research faculty for “research tenure.” Such recommendation constitutes testimony that the persons recommended for “research tenure” are so important to the project or unit/institute that their employment should be continued indefinitely if the persons wish to continue being so employed.

2. In recommending research tenure, the project director or unit head must provide satisfactory evidence that funding for the possible one-year termination period is assured within the budget of the recommending units or from some extramural funding source.

3. That, a recommendation be made by an appropriate academic administrator (e.g., Dean or, in the case of University-level institutions, a responsible administrator in IU Research) and the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, who may appoint appropriate advisory committees of faculty to assist them in reviewing such recommendations. Upon a favorable recommendation, the research faculty shall be notified that they have been granted “research tenure.” Such designation shall further assure each person so approved that they will be retained in the employ of Indiana University (save for termination for adequate cause), at their customary salary rate, for a minimum of one year from the time it is decided—and they have been notified formally—that their employment will be discontinued.

History

Approved: BFC 3/18/80, 12/1/09, [04/02/24](#); Trustees 2/7/81.