

# Research Appointments at Northwestern Research Faculty Policy

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## Research Faculty Policy

**Research faculty.** Faculty-level research appointments are approved by the Office of the Provost. Appointments are for a fixed term, typically from one to three years, contingent on the availability of funds and satisfactory performance. Appointments are normally full time and must be paid at least \$47,476 per annum for a full-time appointment; schools may set a higher minimum at their discretion. In some cases, part-time appointments can be made when it is mutually agreeable to the candidate and the department or center, and when the work effort is consistent with the salary paid; however, even in cases of part-time appointments, a minimum weekly salary of at least \$913 per week is required. Appointments are typically for 12 months; in cases where appointments are for less than 12 months, salary is always paid over 12 months.

Research faculty who are employed by other institutions formally affiliated with Northwestern University (Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Evanston Northwestern Hospital, Children's Memorial Hospital, Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, etc.) are not employees of Northwestern and are not paid by Northwestern, although they may be involved in collaborative research with Northwestern investigators in Northwestern facilities. They may be appointed for a term of up to three years; such positions are always dependent upon their continued employment at the affiliated institution.

**Senior research investigators.** Senior research investigator appointments are for a fixed term from one to three years, based on external funding commitment, Northwestern commitment to internal space and other resources, and approval of the dean and the Office of the Provost. The appointment may be renewed, contingent upon satisfactory performance and continued funding. University policies pertaining to faculty-level research appointees also pertain to senior research investigators.

### **Policies affecting research faculty**

University policies pertain to faculty-level research appointees, including but not limited to the Patent and Invention Policy, Policy on Integrity in Research and Procedures for Reviewing Alleged Misconduct, the Policy Regarding Evaluative Authority over Faculty or Staff, and the Copyright Policy

### **Patent and Invention Policy**

All research faculty are subject to Northwestern University's policies on intellectual property, including the Patent and Invention Policy, which gives the University rights in inventions and discoveries made under conditions of employment or from use of University facilities, resources, or support. The policies regarding intellectual property are available at the Innovation and New Ventures Office web site.

### **Conflict of Interest**

In addition, research faculty members are required to comply with the Policy on Conflict of Interest for Sponsored Programs Supported by the Department of Health and Human Services or National Science Foundation.

## **Proposal submission**

Research faculty and senior research investigators may serve as principal investigators or project directors on research awards and are encouraged to seek independent external funding. Submission of a proposal to an external funding agency requires completion of the University form Proposal Submission Form (Form OSR-1). As appropriate, the OSR-1 form must include approvals by the department chairperson and/or the office of the dean (as may be required) for school-based proposals; by the center director for University Research Center proposals. If a University Research Center proposal includes a commitment of school-based faculty and/or physical resources, appropriate approvals from the department chairperson and dean must also be obtained. Such approvals will signify that suitable arrangements have been made for fiscal oversight and for the use of facilities and equipment.

## **Research Faculty-Level Appointment**

### **Categories of Faculty Covered by this Policy**

**Research faculty.** Faculty-level research appointees are identified by the titles of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor and Research Professor. Faculty-level research appointments are intended to offer a professional pathway to individuals with experience and scholarly qualifications comparable to regular tenure-track and tenured faculty members at the same rank and in the same professional area. Appointees are professional investigators who are interested in and capable of independent investigation and publication, and who support the research mission of the University by assisting the department or center to achieve its research goals. Thus, these appointments are embedded in department or center processes, even though they may be supported in full or in part by a sponsoring regular faculty member.

Research faculty may serve as principal investigators or project directors on research awards and are expected to seek independent external funding. Research faculty are not eligible for tenure; may not participate in the governance of the University or of any academic unit; and may not be assigned regular teaching responsibilities, although they may occasionally take part in classroom or seminar activities. In rare cases where a research faculty member is considered for a teaching assignment, a separate part-time teaching appointment is required. In addition, the effort of the research faculty appointment must be reduced accordingly, so that the research appointment is not funding the teaching appointment.

Faculty-level research appointments are viewed as professional appointments. They are not intended as courtesy or temporary appointments. They are not available to faculty in the emeritus ranks (see section on senior research investigators below). Faculty-level research appointments are often given to faculty at the various medical institutions affiliated with Northwestern University, and there may be an overarching agreement outlining such appointments between the two institutions.

The research faculty ranks are established as an employment category that is distinct from the research staff appointments and differentiated from them by the particular expectation that research faculty are independent investigators who are evaluated in terms of their scholarly achievements. Because they must be supported by non-

appropriated funds at salary levels reasonably equivalent to regular faculty, it is recognized that the opportunity to make faculty-level research appointments is constrained by the funding resources that are available.

In circumstances where it is proposed that a faculty-level research appointment be compensated directly by an outside source, the circumstances should be reviewed by the Office of the Provost and, if necessary, the Office for Research prior to initiation of the procedure for initial appointment described below.

**Senior research investigators.** These appointments apply to Northwestern faculty members who have formally separated from their tenured positions, are interested in continuing their externally funded research, and have current or guaranteed ongoing external research support. According to Internal Revenue Service guidelines, "separation" means relinquishment of tenure, change in duties, reduction in time worked, and term-limited new activity. Senior research investigators serve as principal investigators on externally supported research project(s); there are no institutional/departmental duties or teaching responsibilities associated with this appointment.

Senior research investigators serve as principal investigators on externally supported research project(s); there are no institutional/departmental duties or teaching responsibilities associated with this appointment.

### **Other Categories of Employment Not Covered Under this Policy**

**Research staff.** Research associates, senior research associates, postdoctoral fellows, NRSA postdoctoral fellows, visiting scholars, and visiting predoctoral fellows are covered by a separate policy statement, *Research Staff Appointments*. Their appointments are approved by the Office for Research Planning, Finance, and Communications. [Click here for policy for research staff appointments.](#)

**Postdoctoral fellows.** As of January 1, 2007, Postdoctoral Fellows, Visiting Postdoctoral Fellows and NRSA Postdoctoral Fellows are handled by the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs in The Graduate School. *See: Postdoctoral Fellow Appointments.*

**Technical staff** hold positions in research activities and typically hold bachelor's or master's degrees. They are employed through the Department of Human Resources.

### **Appointment and Funding**

#### **Procedure for initial appointment**

The following procedures are used for initial appointments and renewals for covered individuals, except that a curriculum vita (CV) is not required for reappointment in a position at the same level. As appointments expire, faculty sponsors initiate recommendations for renewals on a case-by-case basis.

**Good faith search**

An effort in good faith to employ persons in EEO classes underrepresented in the research activity is expected on the part of the unit seeking the appointment.

**Non-citizens**

If the appointee is not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, a copy of the approved appointment form must be sent to the International Office by the initiating department or center. The International Office can provide assistance in obtaining the visa that is necessary for employing a foreign national or to extend an offer to visit.

**Appointments initiated in departments or school centers**

In academic departments, a regular faculty member recommends a faculty-level research appointment to the department chairperson, who forwards the recommendation to the dean in accordance with departmental and school procedures established for regular faculty appointments. In school centers, the regular faculty member makes the recommendation for a faculty-level research appointment to the center director, who forwards the recommendation to the dean in accordance with procedures established by the center and the school for regular faculty appointments. The school dean may elect to waive a normally required recommendation of an ad hoc committee or a school-wide committee. If funding is expected from any department or center outside the school, approval of those unit heads is required. Signatures of the department chairperson, center director, and dean on the appointment form indicate agreement with the terms of the appointment. If there are multiple units funding an appointment, the appointment is given in one unit only. The recommendation is then forwarded to the Office for Research for final endorsement before being sent to the Office of the Provost for review and approval.

**Appointments initiated in University centers**

A regular faculty member recommends a faculty-level research appointment to the center director. The center director must seek the concurrence of the academic department in the discipline appropriate for the candidate. The decision to concur with the recommendation for appointment should be made in accordance with departmental and school procedures established for regular faculty appointments. Signatures of the appropriate department chairperson and center director on the appointment form indicate agreement with the terms of the appointment. If funding is expected for the appointment from any school, the center director also forwards the recommendation to the dean for endorsement. The recommendation is then forwarded to the Office for Research for final endorsement before being sent to the Office of the Provost for review and approval.

**Appointments for senior research investigators**

An individual who has separated from a tenured faculty position and has current or guaranteed ongoing external research support may submit a request for appointment as a senior research investigator to the department chairperson, who forwards the request to the dean. Signatures of the department chairperson and dean on the appointment

form indicate a commitment of laboratory and office space. No institutional financial support will be provided for salary or ancillary research costs.

### **Approval by the Office of the Provost**

The school dean or the University center director forwards the recommendation packet for a faculty-level research appointment or appointment as senior research investigator to the Office of the Provost for review and approval by the Associate or Assistant Provost for Faculty. This recommendation packet must include the appropriately signed copy of the Northwestern University Recommendation for Faculty-Level Research Appointment Form, a CV, and supporting documents that would be appropriate for a regular faculty appointment. The packet can also include an appropriately-completed Appointment and Position Data form, which the Office of the Provost will review, approve, and forward on to the Department of Human Resources. Depending on individual school or center procedures, the school or center may choose to wait to submit this form to the Office of the Provost until after the Faculty-Level Research Appointment Form has been approved and an official letter of appointment has been issued to the appointee.

For senior research investigator appointments or faculty-level research appointments for current or former members of Northwestern University's regular faculty, the recommendation packet sent to the Office for Research Planning, Finance, and Communications must also include a formal letter of resignation or retirement from the regular faculty position and a separate disclaimer of tenure, both signed by the candidate.

The Office of the Provost may choose to have recommendations for faculty-level research appointments, reappointments, promotions and/or involuntary terminations reviewed by a faculty committee where the situation warrants.

### **Procedure for Reappointments**

The reappointment procedure is the same as the procedure for initial appointment. The request for reappointment should include a current CV; a review of recent research activity, including publications and grant activity; and letters of support from the faculty sponsor and the department chair or University center director evaluating the research activity and contribution to the department or center research effort, as well as the appointee's record with respect to securing independent external funding.

### **Performance and reappointment or promotion**

A research faculty member's research activity, including publications, grant applications, and external funding, should be reviewed at the time of any reappointment or promotion. Appointees are normally judged by their success in securing external funding and their potential for continued independence, autonomy, and excellence. It is expected that an appointee will be reviewed for promotion after an appropriate number of years of service in the assistant or associate professor rank.

### **Offer and letter of appointment**

No oral or written offer of employment may be extended until all required approvals have been received, and no payroll action initiating a salary for the appointee can be taken until all conditions in the appointment process have been satisfied. The Office of the Provost sends the approved Northwestern University Recommendation for Faculty-Level Research Appointment form and the appointment letter to the school dean or the University center director. The dean or the center director sends the official letter of appointment to the appointee. The letter of appointment should specify the appointee's salary and term of appointment and the basis for evaluation. It should indicate that the appointment is contingent upon the availability of continuing resources, satisfactory performance and state that it is for a "non-teaching, non-tenure-eligible position." The letter must also specify that University policies pertain to faculty-level research appointees, including but not limited to the Patent and Invention Policy, Policy on Integrity in Research and Procedures for Reviewing Alleged Misconduct, the Policy Regarding Evaluative Authority over Faculty or Staff, and the Copyright Policy

Depending on individual school or center procedures, the department, the dean's office or the center director initiates an Appointment and Position Data form to be sent to the Office of the Provost, if this form has not already been initiated (see above); the Office of the Provost will review and approve this form and will forward it on to the Department of Human Resources (HR). This form may be found at the HR web site.

### **Appointment start date and first day of work**

Research faculty should not be permitted to start working at Northwestern until the appointment has been finalized and an official start date has been determined. In addition, because benefits enrollment must be completed within 31 days of the date of hire or of a qualifying change in family or employment status, an appointee starting work 31 or more days prior to the completion of the appointment process is ineligible for some employee benefits until the next scheduled open enrollment period. Newly hired research faculty should attend the orientation session offered by the Department of Human Resources on or immediately following the first day of work to learn about benefit choices; new employees may also enroll in benefit plans at the orientation session.

### **Change in start date**

On occasion, a start date may be delayed due to visa issues or other circumstances. In instances where a start date is delayed, a new Appointment and Position Data form should be sent to the Office of the Provost. It is not necessary to submit a new Recommendation for Faculty-Level Research Appointment form in these instances.

### **Funding for research faculty appointments**

Faculty-level research appointments should be supported by sponsored projects or other non-appropriated University funds. The appointment is contingent on the availability of funding at an approved rate and cannot extend beyond the period of availability of supporting funds. If the position cannot be supported at the existing level because of insufficient non-appropriated funds, the appointment may be terminated or

the effort may be reduced to a level consistent with the salary that can be covered, though this salary must still be at least \$913 per week even in cases of part-time appointments. A reduction in effort may only be determined in consultation with the Office for Sponsored Research; any necessary approval from the relevant funding agency must be obtained prior to changing the effort. Any commitment of salary support in the case of premature termination of project funds will be the responsibility of the department or center to cover from discretionary funds; University appropriated funds may not be used for this purpose. The prevailing fringe benefit rate is charged to the sponsored account that is the source of salary funds. The individual's contribution to benefits will be based on the full-time or part-time status indicated by the effort level; status at less than half time results in ineligibility for some benefits. (See the Fiscal Responsibility for Sponsored Projects.)

### **Interruption of grant funding and leave of absence**

When grant funding is interrupted for a research faculty member, an individual expecting new or renewed funding or their sponsoring PI should contact the Office of the Provost to discuss options.

## **Salary**

### **Research faculty**

Salaries for research faculty are set in accordance with the salary guidelines established by the school, center or division. Research faculty in full-time positions must be paid at least \$47,476; schools may set a higher minimum at their discretion. In cases of part-time appointments, a minimum weekly salary of \$913 per week is required. See also the *Policy on Work Without Compensation*

Research faculty should be reviewed for annual merit increases, with any increase to take effect either at the beginning of the University's fiscal year or upon the anniversary of their start date. Ideally, salary reviews should occur within the regular faculty fiscal year salary adjustment cycle. Salary increase percentages should be based on performance and be commensurate with the average increases of equivalent faculty positions in the school, center or division. Increases may not be communicated to the individual until the review process has been completed. The salary recommendation is forwarded to the Office of the Provost for review and approval. Any midyear salary change is subject to the established approval process.

### **Senior research investigators**

Salary earned by senior research investigators on grants and contracts will be based on an FTE salary which is not greater than the salary earned at the time of formal separation from a tenured position, with the possible addition of the standard annual increase in the budget of the school, division, or department where the individual is located. FLSA exemption minimums apply to senior research investigators in determining whether pay is monthly or hourly.

## **Benefits**

### **Research faculty**

Research faculty are eligible for regular non-tenured faculty benefits. The prevailing fringe benefit rate is charged to the sponsored account that is the source of salary funds. Research faculty do not accrue vacation time or personal floating holidays. Reduction of effort will affect the availability and contribution rates for benefits. Information regarding such changes may be obtained from the Benefits Division of the Department of Human Resources at 847-491-7513, or e-mail [benefits@northwestern.edu](mailto:benefits@northwestern.edu).

### **Senior research investigators**

Senior research investigators are eligible for faculty benefits, on the basis of their full-or part-time status, provided they are paid through the University payroll.

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