

College of Engineering, Forestry & Natural Sciences
Process and Guidelines for the Appointment of Research Faculty

Approved by the faculty via unit representation by chairs or director: 12 yes, 1 absent on April 8, 2009

Introduction

Research professors are appointed based upon their potential, as judged by their qualifications, to render valuable service through collaborative grant activities that help generate research funds for the university. Activities could include: designing, carrying out, and managing research, preparing research publications, supervising research students, and actively participating in the continuing efforts to improve departments, colleges, centers, institutes, and the university. The university does not typically compensate these positions. However, research faculty can secure salary and benefits from externally-sponsored research programs, also known as “soft money.” The university is under no obligation to fund the research faculty member after their external funding has expired. Northern Arizona University permits consideration of time-limited Waivers of Recruitment for research faculty appointments. Research Faculty shall have no expectation of continued employment beyond the end of the current appointment period; however, can be renewable pending satisfactory job performance, availability of funding, and program needs.

This document is intended to clarify the processes (e.g. Waiver of Recruitment, initial appointment, review and evaluation, and reappointment) for non-tenure eligible research faculty and responsibilities of the sponsoring unit.

Individuals who are approved for Research Faculty appointments within CEFNS will report to the Chair or Director of a CEFNS academic unit. Extramural grants generated by CEFNS Research Faculty must list an academic or research unit within CEFNS as the award administrative department.

NAU COFS Definition and Requirements

Per Section 1.2.2 of the May 2007 NAU COFS, research faculty are non-tenured, non-tenure eligible faculty who are appointed to the rank of assistant research professor, associate research professor or research professor. Research faculty have established themselves by expertise, achievements, and reputation to be distinguished scholars and researchers. An individual must hold an earned doctorate degree in the appropriate discipline to be eligible for appointment as a research faculty. Research faculty members are primarily responsible for engaging in, being responsible for, or overseeing a significant area of research or scholarship. Research faculty may serve as principal or co-principal investigators on grants or contracts administered by the university. They are typically supported through external resources secured through the efforts of the appointee or in collaboration with others. Research faculty are appointed one year at a time with the possibility of renewal. They shall have no expectation of continued employment beyond the end of the current appointment period. These appointments may be renewed. The three possible ranks include:

Assistant Research Professor: To be eligible for the rank of assistant research professor, the faculty member must show promise of scholarly activity or other creative endeavors related to the faculty member's discipline.

Associate Research Professor: To be eligible for the rank of associate research professor, the faculty member must supply evidence of a record that shows a sustained pattern of substantial scholarly activity or other creative endeavors related to the faculty member's discipline.

Research Professor: To be eligible for the rank of research professor, the faculty member must supply evidence of national or international recognition in his/her field and a sustained pattern of outstanding scholarly activity or other creative endeavors related to the faculty member's discipline, as well as evidence of leadership within the individual's scholarly and/or creative activity.

Adjunct Faculty vs. Research Faculty

An adjunct faculty classification is a non-compensated, non-tenure eligible position appropriate for individuals who have the potential to provide service to the University. It is an honorary appointment that recognizes the individual's standing and association with the University. Generally, these individuals are either retired or have some primary employment elsewhere. Individuals with a broad range of experiences – including non-academic – can be qualified for this rank. In order to receive compensation, an adjunct must be appointed to an appropriate rank of contract employment.

A department may recommend that an adjunct be permitted to submit a proposal through NAU, but the department assumes all responsibility for the project. In these cases, the department's ability to meet these obligations can be strengthened by having a full-time regular faculty member from the department with appropriate expertise and interest sign on as either the PI or co-PI to the proposal.

It is sometimes difficult to decide which classification (adjunct or research) is appropriate. In addition to assessing the benefits, risks, costs, and opportunities associated with an appointment, the decision to recommend appointment to the research ranks can be made if the individual:

- holds an earned doctorate degree in the appropriate discipline, and
- will become engaged in research-related activities of benefit to the unit sponsoring the individual's appointment, and
- intends to become an employee of NAU, compensated through the self-generation of salary and benefits from one or more externally sponsored research programs that are administered through NAU.

Unless all three of these conditions are met, the rank of adjunct is warranted. The appointment procedures for adjunct faculty are found on the Provost's website at http://home.nau.edu/provost/faculty_info.asp

Sponsoring Unit Considerations and Obligations

Initial Appointment - Process for Recommendation

The individual submits to the sponsoring unit current curriculum vitae, a completed interest statement, and other documentation as requested by the sponsoring department. The interest statement MUST address the following six questions:

1. Do you have an active association with someone in our department?
2. Why are you interested in this appointment?
3. How do you see your research interests fitting in with the research directions of this unit, the college, and the university's mission?
4. What are your expectations of this university and this position?
5. What office and/or laboratory space and equipment needs do you have?
6. Do you plan on involving students in your research?

The submittal is incomplete if one or more of the questions are not answered, and as a consequence, it will not be considered.

The sponsoring unit assesses the individual's qualifications in accordance to the governing NAU COFS requirements, and other unit-specific criteria and processes (e.g. public seminar, faculty discussion, faculty vote). A recommendation is made to the unit's administrative leader (e.g. department chair, executive director, director) to appoint or not appoint at one of the three levels of research faculty rank in accordance to a unit-specified process.

If the recommendation is to appoint, the unit's administrative leader interviews the individual to independently assess the merits of the recommendation.

If the unit leader agrees with the recommendation to appoint, the unit leader writes a letter of recommendation addressed to the dean and supplies the candidate's complete vitae and interest statement. The recommendation letter must address the following:

- State the rank of the recommendation and a justification for that rank.
- State the expected salary range using the academic year (e.g. 190 day) basis from the external funding sources. This salary must be within accepted faculty norms for NAU employees. (Consult with the dean to determine salary norms.)
- What unique qualifications does this individual bring that cannot be met by any other individual? (This information is crucial for the Waiver of Recruitment paperwork.)
- Describe how this individual's research advances the mission of the department, college, or university?
- What is the probability this individual will submit a grant proposal and be funded within their first year?
- How likely is it that this individual will stay to the completion of his/her grant?
- What are the unit's back-up plans just in case the individual is unable to complete the funded program?
- Describe any equipment and space needs, and any other expectations of the individual.

The unit leader ensures proper completion of the request for Waiver of Recruitment and a draft letter of agreement. A template for this agreement letter is provided at the end of this document. The Waiver is found at <http://home.nau.edu/diversity/hiring.asp>.

The unit leader forwards to the dean the recommendation, waiver request, draft letter of agreement, CV, a proposed Statement of Expectations for the first year, and interest statement. If the dean approves, the dean will forward the entire package with a cover to the vice provost for academic personnel for review and approval. The vice provost will send the forms to affirmative action for their subsequent review and approval. Upon approval, affirmative action will return the original forms to the sponsoring unit. The unit leader will finalize the agreement letter and create two copies of the letter. Both copies of the letter will be signed by the unit leader and the dean, and then given to the candidate. The candidate will sign one copy and return it to the unit leader and keep the other copy for his/her records. When the candidate's signature has been obtained on the final original letter of agreement, a copy must be forwarded to the Dean's Office, and the background check must be initiated. The sponsoring unit is responsible for the cost of the background check. Once the signed letter of agreement has been returned, the results of the background check have been received and are found acceptable, and all the approvals have been given, the dean's office processes the hire and the candidate's affiliation with NAU as a non-tenure eligible research faculty commences.

Review and Evaluation

This appointment requires Statement of Expectations and Annual Reviews. Annual Reviews are the responsibility of the Unit leader. Supplemental funding requests (payment for work beyond 1 FTE) are generally not allowed for research faculty who are receiving salary support from federal funds. See <http://www.research.nau.edu/OGCS/resources.html> for details.

Reappointment

The purpose of the renewal of appointment review is to assess the faculty member's potential for reappointment in light of the university's needs, availability of funding, performance, and functions served by that individual. Renewal of appointment is contingent upon the availability of external funding and on the review and evaluation process described in section 1.4.6.2.2 of the May 2007 NAU COFS, and in consideration of approved unit/college criteria for non-tenure eligible faculty. A faculty member whose appointment is non-tenure eligible shall have no legal right of continued employment or expectation of renewal in that appointment beyond the current contract period.

The decision of the Dean shall be final as to renewal of appointment or non-renewal of appointment.

CEFNS Research Faculty Salary Policy

Background: Research faculty are an important part of raising the research profile of Northern Arizona University. Unlike tenured and tenure-track (T/TT) faculty, research faculty are responsible to attract external resources to pay for their salary and ERE expenses, and their job

security is coupled with the availability of those external resources. It is therefore reasonable that research faculty should have a pay scale different from, but coupled to, T/TT faculty pay scales in order to simultaneously reflect the lack of job security and incentivize research faculty. This addendum to the College of Engineering, Forestry & Natural Sciences document entitled Process and Guidelines for the Appointment of Research Faculty is meant to establish the range for research faculty salaries.

Rationale for Policy: Tenure is typically associated with Professor and Associate Professor ranks and faculty in these ranks have the job security associated with academic tenure. Therefore Research Professors and Associate Research Professors have much less job security than their tenured colleagues. While it is acknowledged that the choice of a research faculty position affords very little job security, it is also acknowledged that allowing research faculty salaries to be larger than those of their tenured/tenure-track colleagues is one mechanism to address this issue, namely balancing greater job risk with higher pay. Therefore it is reasonable to use salary scales for Professors and Associate Professors as reference points and apply a scaling factor to establish reasonable ranges of salaries of Research Professors and Associate Research Professors. Untenured faculty, typically at the Assistant Professor rank, have less job security than their tenured colleagues, but there is inherently still greater security, especially related to notification of termination, than afforded to Assistant Research Professors. Therefore it is reasonable to use salary scales for Assistant Professors as a reference point and apply a scaling factor to establish the salaries of Assistant Research Professors. However, due to the difference in job security between tenured and untenured faculty it is also reasonable that the scaling factor for Assistant Research Professors salaries be smaller than for Research Professors and Associate Research Professors.

Policy: Starting salaries of research faculty will be negotiated with the Department Chair/School Director/Center Director at the time of the initial appointment. The starting point for the salary negotiations will be based on the current NAU determined peer-group CUPA range of salaries and the discipline's range of salaries at NAU for the appropriate rank. During the negotiations the starting salary may be increased by no more than 30% in the case of Research Professors and Associate Research Professors, and no more than 15% in the case of Assistant Research Professors. The starting salaries for research faculty, regardless of rank, should not fall below the lower limit of the range of salaries for the T/TT equivalent at NAU. Starting salaries are approved through the standard process for appointing research faculty.

Policy Implications: Salaries of research faculty will not be renegotiated on a routine basis, for example, as the result of variations in funding levels or raises when NAU faculty do not receive raises. Importantly, if external funding drops below the level required to pay for the research faculty salary and associated ERE then the percent effort of the faculty member must be reduced to reflect the available funds (i.e., less than 1.0 FTE). It is also important to note that benefits are not associated with contracts at less than the 0.75 FTE level. Should a research faculty member be hired at NAU as a T/TT faculty member then the salary for the T/TT position will be in line with the NAU T/TT faculty in the discipline and will not be tied to the research faculty scale.

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12/17/2014 TH, 1/16/16 TH

SAMPLE LETTER OF AGREEMENT COMPONENTS FOR ASSISTANT, ASSOCIATE OR FULL RESEARCH PROFESSORS

Red text in this template indicates that the language should be tailored for departmental/college needs. Please remove the red highlight and the heading above for final letters.

DATE

NAME
ADDRESS

Dear _____:

We are pleased to offer you an appointment in _____ as _____ (e.g., Assistant, Associate or Full Research Professor) subject to the review and approval of the Provost, and pending a successful background check. This is a non-tenured, non-tenured eligible appointment effective for duration of _____ (e.g. one to three years depending on the individual circumstances, and synced up to the personnel calendar for non-tenured faculty). Your appointment may be renewed, contingent upon available external funding, effective performance, and program needs.

As a research faculty, the University is under no obligation to compensate you. You are encouraged, however, to seek external funding from grants and contracts through the University to self-fund a salary. For this purpose of grant writing and external awards, your salary on an academic year basis of 190 days is set at _____.

This letter is a general statement of your responsibilities that you and your supervisor will refine once you commence your association with the University. The modified description will then become the Statement of Expectations by which your first year's activities will be evaluated.

TERMS OF OFFER

Expectations (create as appropriate):

Background Check: One of the final steps in this decision to appoint you as a research faculty at Northern Arizona University is the completion of several pre-employment screening activities. These will occur after you receive this conditional letter of agreement. This conditional agreement is contingent upon a satisfactory outcome of screening activities including criminal history check, employment verification, and credentials check as required under Northern Arizona University policy and Arizona Board of Regents policy 6-709. Under some conditions, a fingerprint check is also required. The determination of "satisfactory" is at the sole discretion of the University. If the University determines through this screening that satisfactory results have not been obtained, or that your stated qualifications or credentials are not confirmed, this conditional letter of agreement is void. Enclosed is a "Release and Authorization" form which, when signed by you, authorizes the university to conduct the required

background investigations. Please sign the form and return it to me
(_____).

Official Transcripts: Please have official transcripts for your last degree sent to Zoe Lonetti, Office of the Dean, College of Engineering, Forestry & Natural Sciences, Northern Arizona University, P.O. Box 5621, Flagstaff, AZ 86011.

Should these conditions be satisfactory to you, please sign both original copies of the Letter of Agreement and return one signed copy to me in the envelope provided, keeping the other copy for your records. Also, please sign and return the background investigations authorization form.

Let me close by re-emphasizing how very positive we are about your joining the faculty in _____.

(signatures as appropriate to the position):

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Department chair

Dean

c: Liz Grobsmith, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Others as appropriate

Enclosure

I accept the terms described in this letter for my non-tenured, non-tenure eligible appointment in _____, Northern Arizona University.

(name)
