

Research Ranks at Indiana University

BL-ACA-A5

About This Policy

Effective Dates:

03-18-1980

Last Updated:

02-07-1981

Scope

All research ranks on the Bloomington campus.

Policy Statement

Background

There is a need to create a more adequate system of ranks for full-time research specialists than the present single designation "Research Associate" (IR93). The need arises from two general problems. First, those academic units which have major research projects requiring highly-qualified research specialists on a full-time basis find 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, this university's competitive recruitment situation has become more difficult.*

Indiana University's capacity for serving the scientific community and other clientele (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. Such facilities as the Cyclotron, the Bureau of Evaluative Studies and Testing, the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, and the various research and development operations of SPEA must be able to attract and retain top-flight researchers for non-faculty positions.

Another problem arises from the University's need to define and assure career-ladder opportunities to full-time research employees in keeping with affirmative action policies. The 1979 report of a subcommittee of the Bloomington Faculty Council Affirmative Action Committee points out that over the last five years various University committees have repeatedly found the University's policies concerning research associates (IR93's) inadequate for recruitment, retention, and the evaluation of salary inequities and have recommended a variety of corrective hierarchy and representation of full-time researchers on policy bodies.

Categories

We propose that a three-rank system be created for those researchers who typically hold the terminal degree and postdoctorate experience (or its equivalent) and who are employed by Indiana University for strictly research responsibilities. It is suggested that the research ranks be given the following rank codes and titles:

A separate rank code and title (Research Specialist) should be created for those individuals with lesser qualifications who are assigned to research jobs which are routine and supervised but call for qualifications and responsibilities greater than those of technicians (rank code TE). In addition, we propose that persons working at Indiana University as postdoctoral fellows be designated as Postdoctoral Fellows (with an appropriate, separate, rank code). The three-rank system would be regarded as a career ladder framework, with appropriate policies and procedures for appointment, annual review, and promotion. The creation of positions within the three-rank system, advertising for qualified candidates, selection and appointment procedures, annual review, promotion, and termination would be under well-defined procedures administered through academic units by the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs and further subject to the policies, rules, and procedures of the Campus Affirmative Action Plan as administered by the Campus Affirmative Action Officer. Postdoctoral Fellows could be considered to be eligible to apply for a position in one of the research ranks under certain conditions upon satisfactory

completion of the term of the postdoctorate. Qualified Research Specialists could be eligible to apply for openings in the three-rank system but would not be considered automatically eligible for promotion to the beginning rank. The policies and procedures of the University Affirmative Action Plan would apply in determining eligibility for any of the research ranks (and for Research Specialist) and for determining eligibility of a person holding a research rank for any other University appointment.

- See *Non-Faculty Doctoral Research Staff in Science and Engineering in United States Universities*, Commission on Human Resources, National Research Council. See also: “‘Unfaculty’: a growing factor in research,” *Science* 204:286, April 20, 1979.

** The choice of “Scientist” or “Scholar” would be determined by discipline.

Qualifications for Rank

The qualifications for each of the three research ranks should be roughly equivalent to those set forth in the areas of research for members of the faculty. Typically a candidate for the rank of **Assistant Scientist** would have to have completed the terminal degree in his or her discipline and, in some fields, have at least one year of successful postdoctoral research experience. A person at this rank would be fully capable of original, independent research work but typically would work under the direction of a senior faculty member of an Associate Scientist or a Senior Scientist.

A person at the rank of **Associate Scientist** would have begun to establish a national reputation through published work and would typically have responsibility for carrying out independently, as principal investigator, projects of his or her own devising. Normally a person should 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.

A **Senior Scientist** would 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.

Promotion

Promotion in rank would be considered by following procedures comparable to those for librarians and faculty. Explicit criteria for promotion will be developed by the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, with the help of an advisory committee of faculty and current senior research associates. We anticipate that promotion dossiers would be prepared by the scientist’s department or project unit and would be reviewed by the same review bodies, administrators, and advisory committees at the school and campus levels as those used for faculty.

When promotion recommendations would be considered by the Campus Promotions Advisory Committee, the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs would augment the committee with two persons holding the rank of Senior Scientist / Senior Scholar.

Insurance: Persons holding the rank of Assistant Scientist, Associate Scientist, or Senior Scientist would participate in the same University life insurance plan as provided for faculty and librarians (twice salary to maximum of \$50,000). Health insurance would be available to persons holding research ranks at their option, with the University paying a portion as with faculty and librarians. Persons appointed to research ranks for periods less than nine months would not be eligible for insurance.

Sick Leave: Persons holding any of the three research ranks would receive up to six weeks of sick leave at full pay and the balance of the semester at half pay and may request an extension beyond the end of the semester to a maximum of nine weeks at half pay.

Vacation: Persons appointed to research ranks for a twelve-month period would be entitled to a one-month vacation. No vacation with pay would be accorded persons on less than twelve-month appointments.

Personnel Policies

The chairperson of the department in which a scientist’s project is located (or the project or institute director, in the case of projects not directly under an academic department) would initiate recommendations for the establishment of new positions, advertising plans, appointment, renewals of appointment, and recommendations for promotion. These recommendations would be reviewed and acted upon by the dean of the appropriate academic unit (e.g.,

College of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, School of Education, et al) and by the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs. Associate Scientists and Senior Scientists normally would be appointed for periods of more than one year, depending upon the nature of the research missions to which they are assigned, their responsibilities, and funding prospects. It should be the policy of the University to provide optimal conditions of job security to Associate Scientists and Senior Scientists through the use of extended and open contracts, as funding permits.

Except for those persons holding research ranks who have been granted “research project tenure”^{****} (which carries a one-year termination period), the minimum notice of termination shall be the normal pay period (which is current policy for all non-tenure-line academic appointees).

Persons holding research ranks would not teach, except on a released-time basis and on an appointment to a part-time faculty rank approved by the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs. They would not be eligible for sabbatical leaves.

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 affirmative action procedures.

It is recommended that persons holding research ranks be eligible for election to campus councils and the University Faculty Council on the same terms as faculty and librarians.

In order to provide for an orderly and representative system of consultation and mediation (when needed) with the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, those two deans shall appoint an advisory committee of research appointees with representatives from the major academic units employing researchers.

Project 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 Project Tenure,” has been adopted formally with the approval of the University Administrative Committee and the concurrence of the academic deans: Recognizing that some measure of security is desired and deserved by postdoctoral Research Associates (and perhaps others similarly situated) whose employment at Indiana University has had little or no connection with teaching duties, it is recommended:

1. That it be recognized that, because of their expectations of long continuance, certain research projects shall be designated as projects in which “research project tenure” can be achieved.
2. That the directors of such projects be permitted to recommend, when they deem it proper—but not before the person to be recommended has served on the project for at least a year—members of their staff for “research project tenure.” Such recommendation is his testimony that the project director has taken the decision that the persons recommended for “research project tenure” are so important to the project that in his opinion their employment on the project should be continued through the life of the project if the persons wish to continue being so employed.
3. That, when such a recommendation has been approved by the appropriate central administrative officials, the person shall be notified that he has been granted “research project tenure.” Such designation, in addition to granting tenure during the life of the project save for termination for adequate cause, shall further assure each person so approved that he will be retained in the employ of Indiana University, at his customary salary rate, for a minimum of one year from the time it is decided—and he has been notified formally—that the project will be discontinued.

(Board of Trustee minutes: March 3, 1956, page 28)

In implementing this policy the following procedures and criterion should be applied:

1. Recommendations of project tenure from project or unit directors must be approved by the appropriate academic dean and the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs who may appoint appropriate advisory committees of faculty and research personnel to assist them in reviewing such recommendations.

In recommending project 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 outside funding source.

History

Approved: BFC 3/18/80, 12/1/09; Trustees 2/7/81.

Related Information

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

[BL-ACA-A1 Academic Appointments](#)

[BL-ACA-A3 Bloomington Campus Policies For Non-Tenure-Track Instructional Appointments](#)