Regulation of Research Appointments
ACA-20

About This Policy

Effective Dates:
02-07-1981

Last Updated:
12-07-2020

Responsible University Administrator:
Board of Trustees, Indiana University

Policy Contact:
Campus Chief Academic Affairs Official

Scope

All individuals holding appointments as a Research Scientist or Scholar.

Policy Statement

1. Research Ranks
   a. Research scientist or scholar appointments are appropriate for individuals who typically hold the terminal
degree and post-doctorate experience (or its equivalent) and who are appointed by Indiana University for
research responsibilities. These appointees may do some teaching, but research responsibilities must be
their primary responsibility, and they will be evaluated only on their research.

   b. A separate title should be used 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. In addition, individuals working at Indiana University as postdoctoral fellows shall be designated
as postdoctoral fellows. Qualified research appointees are eligible to apply for openings in the three-rank
system but are not considered automatically for promotion to the beginning rank.

   c. The research scientist or scholar appointment category is a three-rank system that is 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 should be under well-
defined procedures administered through academic units by the chief academic official for the campus,
Postdoctoral fellows are eligible to apply for a position in one of the research ranks under certain conditions
upon satisfactory completion of the terms of the post-doctorate.

2. Qualifications for Rank
   The qualifications for each of the three research ranks are as follows:

   a. Typically a candidate for the rank of Assistant Scientist or Scholar would have to have completed the terminal
degree in the candidate’s discipline and, in some fields, have at least one year of successful postdoctoral
research experience. An individual at this rank would be fully capable of original, independent research
work, but would typically work under the direction of a more senior faculty member, which includes an
Associate Scientist or Scholar or a Senior Scientist or Scholar.

   b. An individual at the rank of Associate Scientist or Scholar 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 the individual’s own devising. Normally an individual 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 or Scholar.
c. A Senior Scientist or Scholar 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 the individual’s discipline.

3. **Dismissal**

Dismissal of an individual with a research appointment holding a long-term appointment which has not expired may occur because of loss of research funding, closure or permanent downsizing of the program in which the faculty member serves, or loss of other outside funding on which the appointment was based; otherwise, dismissal of such faculty shall occur only for reasons of professional incompetence, serious personal or professional misconduct, or university financial exigency. Non-reappointment of research faculty to a new appointment term may occur for the foregoing reasons or may occur as well for reason of changing staffing needs of the program. The jurisdiction of campus faculty grievance processes shall include cases of dismissal and non-reappointment of research faculty.

4. **Research Associates and Postdoctoral Fellows**

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. Individuals working at the university as postdoctoral fellows shall be designated as postdoctoral fellows.

**Definitions**

**Personal or professional misconduct:** Conduct that has been determined to violate a misconduct policy of the university or a campus which has been enacted or approved by a faculty governance organization, including **UA-03, Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct; ACA-30, Research Misconduct, ACA-33, Code of Academic Ethics**, and campus policies on personal misconduct.

**History**

This policy was adopted on February 7, 1981. It was revised in 2020 and to cross-reference the ACA-41, the university’s financial exigency policy (UFC Executive Committee, May 14, 2020), and to define personal and professional misconduct (UFC, December 7, 2020).

**Related Information**

ACA-18, Regulation of Clinical and Lecturer Appointments  
ACA-19, Regulation of Professor of Practice Appointments  
ACA-30, Research Misconduct  
ACA-33, Code of Academic Ethics  
ACA-41, Faculty Role Regarding University Financial Exigency  
ACA-52, Permanent Separations for Academic Appointees  
UA-03, Sexual Misconduct