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Research Faculty Policy

Research faculty. Faculty-level research appointments are approved by the vice president for research. 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 \$23,660 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. Appointments are for eleven months, allowing for one month of unpaid leave; salary is always paid over 12 months. Appointments in the Feinberg School of Medicine may be for 12 months in those departments/divisions where regular faculty typically hold 12 month appointments.

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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 vice president for research. 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

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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 courtesies 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 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.

An individual who meets the criteria for appointment as a senior research investigator and who holds emeritus status is appointed as *associate professor/professor emeritus in service*.

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](#).

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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.

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.

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

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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 Vice President for Research.

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 for Research](#) for review and approval by the Vice President for Research. 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.

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 vice president for research 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 for Research Planning, Finance, and Communications](#) 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](#)

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[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 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 by more than one month, a revised appointment form, with appropriate signature, must be forwarded to the [Office for Research Planning, Finance, and Communications](#) for re-approval.

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. 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 should seek a leave of absence, which is available for three months and renewable for a period not to exceed one year or two successive submissions of the grant proposal/renewal; requests for such leaves must be approved by the [Office for Research Planning, Finance, and Communications](#). After this approval, the *Appointment and Position Data* form is forwarded to the Department of Human Resources for processing. While on a leave of absence, an individual may continue to purchase certain benefits without University contribution and, if funding is restored, can be reinstated to employment and benefits-eligible status upon return to employment at the end of the leave of absence.

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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 \$23,660; schools may set a higher minimum at their discretion. 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 for Research Planning, Finance, and Communications](#) 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.

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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