

## **PHYSICS DEPARTMENT POLICY FOR RESEARCH RANK APPOINTMENTS**

Adopted on November 7, 2000  
Revised and approved February 28, 2006

### **Preamble**

Research faculty ranks are appropriate for scientists whose primary appointment at the University is in the Physics Department and who exist on departmental support and/or grant support administered at the University.. With few exceptions research ranks are not intended to be career tracks. Research rank appointments are not appropriate for faculty whose primary responsibilities involve teaching. Because the infusion of new ideas brought by junior researchers benefits the departmental research effort, in general the department supports the hiring of junior research faculty in preference to more experienced research ranks.

The benefits research rank faculty bring to the Physics Department may include additional visibility from the research performed through presentations, publications and patents, fresh research ideas, new research equipment developed and/or managed by the research faculty member, additional services provided by the research faculty member, such as occasionally teaching classes, running seminars, and training graduate students, and additional indirect costs credited to the Department from external grants and contracts. These benefits are at least partially offset by additional costs to the Department. The following departmental policy sets priorities for allocation of Departmental resources for research rank faculty, and also serves as a guide for the departmental management of research rank appointments.

Where appropriate, research faculty should be encouraged to take part in the functioning of the Department. Participation in departmental affairs includes, but is not necessarily limited to, participation where appropriate in faculty meetings, retreats, and other faculty functions, service where appropriate on departmental committees, and supervision of graduate and undergraduate students.

Departmental support for a research faculty member must reflect the perceived importance of his/her research and/or teaching contributions, both intrinsically and to the department, as well as the effect of such support on resources available for other research faculty appointments. Since a research rank appointment cannot confer tenure, it is possible that changes in departmental research priorities or departmental resources may result in termination of existing research faculty appointments.

### **Prioritization of Departmental Resources**

Departmental support includes, but is not necessarily limited to, allocation of office and laboratory space, the use of equipment and supplies, payment of salary and benefits for services rendered, use of facilities at departmental rates, and allocation of resources to graduate students and research associates working for a research rank professor.

Tenure track faculty have first priority for departmental support. In order of decreasing priority, departmental support is allocated to the research ranks as follows: (1) research faculty who have external funding and are working with tenure track faculty, (2) research faculty who have external funding and are working on research of benefit to the Department, (3) research faculty who are not presently funded by an external research grant, but whose presence in the Department is deemed beneficial (this category may include research faculty who receive departmental funds for occasional teaching, but this category does not include those who are primarily teaching), (4) other research faculty who do not fall into any of the previous three categories. Although these guidelines should be followed in general, the Chair should retain wide discretionary latitude to allocate resources to the best advantage.

### **Prioritization of Research Topics**

Research and/or teaching carried out by research and visiting faculty, even if completely externally supported, should benefit directly the departmental research and/or teaching program. Collaboration with regular faculty research groups is tangible evidence of this benefit.

### **Terms of Appointment**

Legally all non-tenured appointments are made on a year-to-year basis, subject to funding and university approval. When there is a reasonable expectation of continued funding, appointments may be made for a longer term, but still contingent upon adequate salary funding. Procedures and criteria for departmental formal and informal review for retention and promotion are specified below.

In order to maintain year-to-year flexibility in the disposition of discretionary research funds and space, the department generally discourages long-term implied commitments in the research ranks. Exceptions can be made for special cases in which a longer-term commitment of a particular researcher to a Departmental research effort is deemed vital for the success of that effort.

### **Review of Independent Research Programs**

If the primary external grant funding for a research program does not include a tenure track faculty member as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator, the research program is considered independent. To advise the department Chair in assessing the benefit to the research mission of the department, each independent research program shall be reviewed at its inception as an independent program and every three years or more frequently at the Chair's discretion. The department Chair, with the advice of the Policy Board, shall appoint a subcommittee of the tenure-track faculty for each independent research program review. One member of that committee may be proposed as an advocate by the principal investigator of the research program under review. The subcommittee will review the quality of the assigned research program, as well as the benefit of the program to the department, and will subsequently provide a written report to the Policy Board containing its recommendations.

### **Supervision of Students**

Research rank faculty are encouraged to supervise graduate and undergraduate students. In the case of graduate students, a tenured or tenure-track faculty member shall serve as the official chair of the supervisory committee.

### **Participation in Faculty Meetings**

Research faculty members are encouraged to participate in faculty committee activities and faculty meetings at the invitation of the department Chair. According to University Policies and Procedures 9-2 Section 4 D 1, research faculty are not eligible to vote on matters relating to appointment, retention, tenure, or promotion.

### **Retention and Promotion**

Tenure does not apply in the research ranks. Research rank appointments and promotions follow the same procedures as those used for regular faculty (see Departmental RPT Procedures and Criteria) with the following exceptions: (1) All auxiliary faculty members of appropriate rank may participate in the deliberations. Eligibility for participation is the same as for nontenured regular faculty. (2) Auxiliary faculty may not vote on questions of retention or promotion (PPM 9.2 Sec 4.D.1). (3) There is no "up or out" probationary time limit for promotion from Research Assistant Professor to a higher rank.

Standards for retention and promotion in the research ranks are the same as the Departmental standards for retention and promotion in the tenure-track ranks with the following exceptions: (1) It is not appropriate to evaluate teaching abilities for a research faculty member who has had no teaching duties within the department. (2) A research faculty member associated with a departmental research group is not expected to demonstrate independence in formulating a program of research, (3) In cases of appointments of individuals holding a faculty position elsewhere and receiving salary outside the department, the research rank is normally identical to the faculty rank in the home department.

### **Formal and Informal Review**

The procedures for the formal and informal review for retention and promotion in the research ranks are the same as for regular faculty, except that the timeline may differ. (See Departmental RPT Procedures and Criteria.) Appointments in the research ranks must be renewed on an annual basis. In all cases the department conducts an annual formal or informal review according to the same schedule as for the

regular faculty ranks. Ordinarily, termination prior to an agreed term requires a formal review. However, a lack of salary support for the research faculty member can be sufficient cause for early termination without a formal review. As permitted by University Policies and Procedures 9-2 Section 4 D 1, after a probationary period of seven years for research faculty member first appointed as a research assistant professor or of five years for a research faculty member first appointed as a research associate professor or research professor, the department may schedule subsequent formal reviews at five year intervals with the interim reappointment at the discretion of the Department Chair. The Chair may request a “triggered” formal review in any year as provided in PPM 9-5.1 Sec 2 B 2b.

**Grandfather Clauses**

Research faculty whose primary duties were teaching prior to 2000 may retain the research rank title. Scientific collaborators whose primary appointments were outside the Physics department prior to 2005 and who do not require significant departmental support may retain the research rank title.

**Revision of Policy**

Every five years the Chair will appoint an ad hoc committee to review this policy.