

Assistant, Associate, and Research Professor – UW College of Engineering

Draft Guidelines, Updated January 2020

I. Justification

By authorizing use of the titles Assistant, Associate and Full Research Professor, the College of Engineering aims to recruit and successfully retain outstanding researchers, who will contribute to our research mission. Many of our peer institutions such as Stanford, University of Michigan, and University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign have research professor titles within their Engineering units. This title series provides opportunities to recruit full time researchers into the College of Engineering and strengthen our research productivity.

II. Campus Policy - Attached.

III. Description of the Position

The Research Professor series is non-tenure track appointment that will enable and recognize a concentrated research effort. Members of the Research Professor track are expected to focus principally on research, including leadership in science and technology, pursuit of intramural and/or extramural funding, and compliance with all financial, ethical, and administrative aspects of the research. Holders of the title Research Professor (at all ranks) have particular expertise to do advanced level and high quality research but without the interest for teaching, advising, and service responsibilities of tenure track faculty. Their primary responsibilities include initiating new research activities; creating, managing, or sustaining research programs; seeking extramural funding opportunities, submitting proposals, and fulfilling the terms of research grants and contracts; planning, conducting and reporting on original research; and representing their research programs externally. Persons appointed to these titles will routinely serve as Principal Investigators on grants and contracts.

The title of Research Professor may not be used for positions whose responsibilities substantially replicate those of tenure-track faculty. Accordingly, such individuals normally are not permitted to teach courses for enrolled students. In the event that some teaching of courses is requested by the appointing Department or Unit, this teaching must be consistent with the terms of the individual's funding and must be approved by the Dean and the campus for Dual Role.

At the time of appointment or promotion the Research Professor's area of expertise must be one that is deemed to enhance the research of the College of Engineering. In this way, we anticipate the Research Professor as adding to, or extending the research profile of the unit. Demonstrated external visibility and impact in the field of the appointment is expected for promotion.

IV. Appointment Details

All Research Professor appointments are non-tenure track and it is expected that there will not be any movement from research professor to tenure track appointments, aside from exceptional circumstances as approved by the Dean. New Research Professor appointments will proceed through open recruitment searches as well as internal appointments. The initial rank of candidates is dependent upon their level of experience and is determined by the Department or Unit with the Dean's approval.

Appointments: Research Professor appointments are made with the approval of the Department or Unit Executive Committee (or equivalent) and the Dean. The Dean will convene a Review Committee

typically made up of two faculty members and two academic staff members to review new appointments and promotional requests.

Credentials: Research professors must hold a research Ph.D. degree (or equivalent) in a field appropriate to the position. To qualify for the title, Research Professors are also expected to have potential to achieve significant stature as a researcher in the scholarly discipline, equivalent to that of a tenure track faculty member of similar rank, and to have demonstrated a trajectory that promises a continued high level of achievement.

Assistant Research Professors must have an earned research doctorate (PhD) or other equivalent terminal degree in their field and should demonstrate *the criteria that follow*:

- 1) A promising emerging record of excellent research products, and evidence of successful management and completion of stated objectives of previous research.
- 2) Strong potential for scholarly development.
- 3) Strong potential for continued acquisition of extramural funding as PI or Co-PI [MPI].
- 4) A productive academic record of high quality peer-reviewed publications as primary and/or senior author.
- 5) Evidence of participation in relevant academic or professional meetings and societies.
- 6) An emerging track record, mindset, and training in ethical research practices.
- 7) Main criterion for entry into the Research Professor series is outstanding achievements or potential in the area of research.

Associate Research Professors and Research Professors must have an earned research doctorate (PhD) or other equivalent terminal degree in their field and should demonstrate *the criteria that follow*:

- 1) A distinguished, sustained record of impactful research products.
- 2) “National” (Associate Research Professor) or “international” (Research Professor) recognition within the candidate’s discipline.
- 3) Successful, sustained management and completion of stated objectives of previous research.
- 4) Scholarly independence, where independence is based on the standard that defines independence in the respective School/College/Division.
- 5) Strong history of leadership in sustained extramurally funded research.
- 6) A strong and productive academic record of high-quality peer-reviewed publications as primary and/or senior author.
- 7) Evidence of participation and leadership in relevant academic or professional meetings and societies.
- 8) A meritorious track record, mindset, and training in ethical research practices.
- 9) The main criterion for participation in the Research Professor series is outstanding achievements or potential in the area of research.

A dossier-based review must be conducted for initial appointment by the Department or Unit and the Dean. The dossier-based review may be conducted during the first year, with continued appointment contingent on successful review. The dossier shall include at least three confidential letters from scholars or professional specialists of appropriate rank and that are objective evaluators, and a report of the faculty vote. The Dean makes the ultimate decision about appointment.

Evaluation Criteria: For each Research Professor appointment, there must be a specific job description and evaluation criteria established for the position. This document will be used in selecting the candidate for the position, as well as in ongoing evaluations of the research professor once they have arrived, including annual evaluations for the salary improvement program.

Promotion: Promotion from Assistant Research Professor to Associate Research Professor and from Associate Research Professor to Research Professor is based on the quality of achievement, level of productivity, national and international stature in the field, leadership of the independent research program, effectiveness with colleagues and with participants in the research program, and dedicated service to the field. Promotion is merit based and is not automatic after any particular number of years holding the title. A formal dossier review is required for promotion. Documentation of significant contributions to the candidate's research field is a primary consideration in the promotion process at this and all major research universities.

The nature of engineering research has changed dramatically in recent years with more emphasis being placed on collaboration and teamwork. The contributions of the candidate remain the basis for evaluation and should be clearly delineated in the documentation. Publication of research in high quality peer-reviewed journals and at conferences is the primary avenue for disseminating knowledge that has been discovered in research. Publication rates and norms differ widely by discipline. The successful candidate will have a track record of significant impact on their chosen research field(s). Evidence of research impact can include testimonial letters from leading figures in the candidate's area of research, publication citation counts, scholarly awards, or commercial enterprises developed or impacted by the candidate's work, to name just a few examples. Research funding rates vary widely among disciplines and within disciplines based on the type of research that is undertaken. At the rank of Research Professor, the candidate is expected to have demonstrated that they are capable of fully funding and sustaining their research endeavors from external sources. External funding is another metric that defines the impact of the candidate's research.

Research Professors at the Assistant or Associate levels may be nominated for promotion with consultation with a mentoring/oversight committee and approval of the Department or Unit Executive Committee. The College of Engineering will consider promotions to the level of Associate Research Professor and Research Professor with approval by the Dean.

- A. See above criteria for Associate Research Professor and Research Professor. Criteria must be met to consider a recommendation for promotion to the next level.
- B. The Department or Unit Executive Committee (where applicable) will review and evaluate each case.
- C. The College of Engineering review committee will review and make a recommendation to the Dean.
- D. Research Assistant Professors may remain at their current rank throughout their career at UW-Madison. There is no automatic progression requirement for promotion.

V. College Review Committee Process

Based on the candidate's dossier and the external letters, the Department or Unit will provide a letter of evaluation addressed to the Dean. This letter should provide an analysis of the candidate's experience and performance using the relevant criteria related to their position, a summary of the letters, and a recommendation for promotion. If the promotion also includes a change in or additional professional responsibilities, the change should be described. This letter will be added to the candidate materials and external letters.

The Dean will convene a committee made up of two tenured faculty members and two academic professionals at or above the rank being considered. Based on the results of an official vote, the committee will send its recommendation to the Dean describing the rationale of the vote either for or against promotion.

The Committee Chair will write a letter to the Dean summarizing the main strengths and/or weaknesses of the case and whether they recommend promotion or not. The Committee Chair will forward the recommendation with the completed package to the Dean for final review. The final outcome of the decision is communicated in writing by the Dean of the College to the Department or Unit at the end of the review process.

VI. Impact Statement

As already noted, the primary purpose of the Research Professor title is to be able to recruit and retain the best possible non-tenure-track faculty and to maximize their contributions to the college. The Research Professor title is not expected to reduce the number of tenure-track or other non-tenure-track faculty in the College of Engineering because those lines are closely tied to the college teaching load, and research professors do not play regular or ongoing teaching roles. The use of the title is expected to strengthen the college and ultimately to contribute positively towards our research mission.