

(Approved by VUSM Executive Faculty 1/10/24)

Criteria for Ranks on the Research Track

The Research track applies to faculty who make their primary contributions through research. These faculty are key members of a research team and support the activities of other investigators and participate in time-limited, funding-dependent research programs. Such persons usually do not have formal teaching assignments. Teaching is often done in the course of laboratory work.

Research Instructor: Makes significant contributions to goals of a research laboratory or program or a research core facility. Appointed for one year terms for up to three years total at this rank.

Example activities include*:

- Designs and executes experiments independently
- Drafts manuscripts under the mentorship of PI
- Participates in department activities (e.g. retreats, seminars, faculty meetings)
- Assists PI with grant preparation
- Trains laboratory personnel (e.g., trainees and staff)
- Provides advice to other research staff and trainees
- Operates and maintains equipment in a research laboratory or Core Facility
- Performs routine services in a Core Facility

Research Assistant Professor: Operates in a more independent manner. Capable of developing and initiating new projects based on their own ideas.

Example activities include*:

All of the above plus:

- Writes sections of grants
- Writes and submits P&F-type awards
- Participates in departmental activities (seminars, faculty meetings, retreats)
- Presents posters or talks at regional or national conferences
- Reviews manuscripts for scientific journals
- Prepares near final versions of figures, tables, and text for manuscripts
- Lectures in courses directed by others
- Oversees key operational aspects of a Core Facilities
- Provides high level advice to users of Core Facilities
- Establishes new services and procedures for Core Facilities
- Helps write S10 grants to fund new core equipment

Research Associate Professor: Functions in a nearly independent manner. Is developing a national reputation in their area of research.

Example activities include*:

All of the above plus:

- Writes independent grants and manuscripts with input from PI or Core Director
- Serves on student thesis committees
- Serves as a co-mentor to graduate students and fellows
- Reviews grant applications
- Develops new research areas, or significantly enhances an established research program
- Develops or adopts new research methodologies and resources
- Leads course sections and/or develops educational tools
- Invited to present their research
- Chairs sessions at scientific conferences
- Contributes to patents on new technologies
- Independently directs and oversees a Core Facility, organizes faculty user committees, and educates users
- Writes S10 grants to fund new core equipment

Research Professor: Functions in a completely independent manner. Has developed a national reputation in their area of research focus.

Example activities include*:

All of the above plus:

- Is the PI of funded grant applications and runs own research program
- Is the senior and/or corresponding author on publications
- Serves on grant review panels
- Wins national awards in their field
- Serves as the Scientific Director of Core Facility
- Makes technology development decisions, negotiates and sets contracts with vendors
- Negotiates for Core resources

*These are examples, not an exhaustive list. It is not expected that the faculty member engage in all of the bulleted activities, but that they do enough to comply with the spirit of the overarching principle of the position rank.

Other Recommendations:

- Research track faculty must undergo performance review annually by their mentors. This review must be submitted to their departmental promotion committee and/or department chairperson.