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3051: GENERAL GUIDELINES

Project series titles are given to those appointees who make significant and creative contributions to a research or creative project in any academic discipline. Appointees may be ongoing members of a research team or may be employed for a limited period of time to contribute high-level skills to a specific research or creative program. They are not required to carry out independent research or develop an independent research reputation, nor are they expected to demonstrate the capacity to do so. Ordinarily, appointees will carry out research or creative programs with supervision by a member of the Professor or Professional Research Series. Nevertheless, those who hold a Project title are expected to have a broader range of knowledge and competency and a higher level of independence than appointees in the Specialist series, whose appointment and advancement depend on the technical contributions that they make to the work of the research team.

Though an appointee in the Project series does not usually serve as a Principal Investigator, the Vice Chancellor for Research has the authority to grant exceptions. Any request for and approval of an exception to this policy must be in writing and must be made prior to any offer of employment.. Exceptions are generally required when the candidate lacks the full requirements for a Professional Research title.

A. CRITERIA

Candidates for a title in this series must have earned a doctorate or its equivalent.

In judging a candidate for appointment or promotion to a position in this series, the two criteria outlined and described below are used. An evaluation of the candidate's achievement in both criteria is required, though reasonable flexibility may be exercised in balancing heavier commitments and responsibilities in one area against lighter commitments and responsibilities in another area. Project titles do not require appointees to participate in University and public service, though doing so is encouraged.

Project Scientists do not have any teaching responsibilities. Project series appointees, however, may be involved in the training and mentorship of undergraduates and graduate students. Appointees in this series who teach must hold concurrently an appropriate instructional title, following campus review procedures for such appointment.

Significant, original, and creative contributions to a research or creative program or project

This can be documented by one or more of the following:

- Publications that acknowledge the appointee's significant and meaningful contribution to the work.
- Publications on which the appointee is an author.
- Other evidence (e.g., letters from collaborators or Principal Investigators) that work done by the appointee contributed to publishable research.
- Active dissemination of information (beyond the boundaries of the campus) through informal instruction, presentations, or other means stemming from the appointee's research accomplishments.

- Other evidence of recognized expertise may include formal documentation of intellectual effort and participation in publishable research activities, first authorship on publications/patents, presentation of research at regional/national meetings, invitations to review grant proposals and/or journal articles, invitations to participate in research projects, and/or service on advisory panels.

Research publications and other creative accomplishments will be evaluated, not merely enumerated. There should be evidence that the candidate is continuously and effectively engaged in research activity of scholarly quality and significance within the defined area of expertise and specialization, contributing broad knowledge and competency at a high level of independence to a research or creative program.

Professional competence and activity

Project series appointees are expected to engage in professional activities that are directly related to their professional expertise and achievement. The appointee's professional activities will be examined for evidence of achievement and leadership in their field of expertise and for demonstrated progression in the development or utilization of new approaches and techniques for the solution of professional problems.

Such activities may include:

- Participating in appropriate professional/technical societies or groups and other educational and research organizations.
- Reviewing research proposals.
- Reviewing journal manuscripts and other publications related to the area of expertise.

B. RANK

Appointments

The initial rank (Assistant, Associate, or Full) of an appointee to the Project series is dictated by:

- The specialization, productivity, and experience of the candidate;
- The complexity and quality of the research for which the candidate will be responsible;
- The level of independence with which the candidate will work (working independently does not mean that the candidate has an independent program); and
- The specialized research assignments/tasks the candidate will assume.

Advancements

As an academic appointee, advancement of a candidate in this series is based on individual qualifications and meritorious performance/scholarly achievement and is not automatic or based on length of service.

Advancement through the ranks requires measurable growth in the candidate's research efforts/activity with respect to quality, productivity, scope, reputation, and impact within the research field.

Promotion to the next rank requires continued scholarly achievement and professional growth, resulting in publishable research and other evidence of productivity, as well as increased professional recognition.

C. SALARY

Appointees to the Project series are compensated according to the **Academic Salary Scales** issued by the Office of the President on a fiscal year basis. Off-scale components are allowable in this series (See **APM 620**).

Appointees may serve full-time, part-time, or without salary. Project titles may be supported by State and non-State funds. Funding sources used to compensate the Project series must permit research and be approved by either the Dean or Sponsored Projects.

D. TERMS OF SERVICE

An appointment or a reappointment to the Project series is made with a specified ending date. This is communicated to the appointee in the Appointment Letter or the Reappointment Letter.

Maximum terms for appointments and reappointments are provided below; when appropriate, recommended terms may be shorter. Reappointments may be made to the same rank and step, i.e., without a merit increase or promotion.

The EVC has the authority to approve above-scale salary levels up to and including the Regental compensation threshold. For salaries beyond the Regental compensation threshold, authority rests with The Regents on recommendation of the President, after appropriate review and as prescribed in **Section 101.2 (a)(2)** of the Standing Orders of The Regents.

Level	Max. Appt. Term	Normal Periods of Service	Service Limits
Assistant Project I, II, III, IV, V, VI	2 Years	2 Years per Step	8 Years (APM 311)
Associate Project I, II, III	2 Years	2 Years per Step	None
Associate Project IV, V	3 Years	3 Years per Step	None
Project I, II, III, IV	3 Years	3 Years per Step	None
Project V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, and Above Scale	3 Years	None	None

E. NORMAL PERIOD AT RANK AND/OR STEP

Normal periods of service at each step are listed in the table above. Six months or more of service, with or without salary, in any fiscal year counts as one full year of service. Titles of Assistant Project V and VI, and Associate Project IV and V are used only in exceptional situations and with proper justification. When service at Assistant Project V is followed by service at Associate Project I, the normal period of combined service with both titles at the steps indicated is two years. This applies for combined service at Assistant Project VI and Associate Project II, at Associate Project IV and Project I, and at Associate Project V and Project II.

3052: RECRUITMENT

A. OPEN RECRUITMENT

To initiate a recruitment, the PI should complete form **AP601: Job Posting Request (Researchers Only)** and submit it to his or her Dean's office for approval and routing to the Academic Personnel Office (APO). APO is responsible for approving all ads and posting on the UC Merced website. Approved ads will be posted in external journals and websites by School staff. Ads will be posted for a minimum of thirty days to ensure broad access, and no scheduled interviews should take place before the end of the thirty-day period.

During recruitment, PIs must pay attention to the employment eligibility of any international applicants. Appropriate visas can take several months to obtain, and the PI should notify School staff and APO as early as possible of a potential visa case. While an application for a visa cannot be finalized until the appointment is approved, preliminary inquiries can often help in starting the visa process. Questions should be referred to the **Office of International Affairs (OIA)**. (see **APM 530**)

B. WAIVERS OF RECRUITMENT

It is understood that circumstances exist in which a Waiver of Recruitment is appropriate. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- A candidate is so uniquely qualified for the position (e.g., based on research expertise, or national or international recognition, or specific knowledge, skills, or abilities) that an open recruitment is unlikely to result in attracting a more qualified individual.
- A new appointee relocates his or her laboratory to UC Merced and brings individuals who are currently funded by the project. Since the job is moving, the individuals employed on the project are moving with the job.
- A candidate is a faculty member's advisee and agrees to remain at UC Merced in a post-graduation appointment to complete the work on an ongoing project and/or to write the results for publication of the completed research.

A request for Waiver of Recruitment can be submitted via memo from the PI to the appropriate Dean. If the Dean approves the request, it shall be forwarded to APO. The request should include:

- candidate's name
- proposed title, step, annual salary, percentage, appointment begin and end date
- a description of how the candidate was identified
- an explanation of the reason for waiving the open recruitment (i.e., unique qualifications or appointee is employed in a relocated lab)

C. REAPPOINTMENT

An open recruitment is not required in order to reappoint an individual when that individual was previously recruited for the same position.

3053: APPOINTMENT

The Project series is used for academic appointees who are expected to have a broader range of knowledge and competency and a higher level of independence while engaging in research or contributing to a creative program or project. Candidates must have earned a doctorate degree or its equivalent.

A. CRITERIA

Project series appointments are made to provide research projects with necessary skills, experience, and knowledge. Individuals appointed to the series are expected to have specialized education, training and a higher level of independence. At the Assistant level, the appointee contributes to the research efforts of existing projects with a level of independent participation. At the Associate and Full levels, the appointee provides considerable input in the planning and execution of research projects, moving towards independent project development. Providing specialized skills in support of research, rather than conducting research as the principal responsibility, is also allowable in this series.

B. PROCESS

- The Principal Investigator will prepare an appointment file for the selected candidate to be forwarded to the appropriate Dean. The appointment file should include updated biographical information and the recommendation for appointment. The appointment recommendation should outline specific qualifications that apply to the Project series and the contributions expected to be made by the candidate. Non-confidential letters of recommendation, evidence of outstanding research accomplishments or other supporting documents may be included.
 - If approved, the Dean will sign the appointment recommendation and forward the appointment file to the Academic Personnel Office as Office of Record for personnel actions.
 - An appointment letter will be issued to the candidate by the Dean's office.
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3054: MERIT, PROMOTION, APPRAISAL REVIEW

Appointments in this series are made at the normal period of service at the step to which the candidate is appointed, or for less time. There are no limits on years of service in this series. Please refer to the **Academic Salary Scales** for the normal periods at each step.

The Dean is responsible for making certain that eligible candidates are reviewed and are eligible for merit review after service at the normal period in step.

Appointees in the Project series are assessed on their demonstrated significant, original, and creative contributions to a research or creative program or project; advancement of knowledge in the discipline; professional competence and activity; and their University and public service, if applicable. This assessment should be documented in the recommendation for reappointment. The reappointment process follows the appointment process outlined above.

3056: DISCIPLINE

This policy provides the standards and procedures for instituting corrective action or dismissal of non-Senate academic appointees. Corrective action or dismissal may be instituted for good cause, including but not limited to misconduct, unsatisfactory work performance, or dereliction of academic duty. For non-Senate academic appointees who are subject to peer review for performance evaluation, demotion and dismissal for unsatisfactory work performance shall involve the regular peer review process. Such peer review shall be advisory to the administrator authorized to institute the demotion and dismissal action.

RESPONSIBILITY

Unit Chairs, supervisors and other appropriate administrative authorities have the responsibility to ensure that each appointee has the appropriate training and mentoring opportunities in order to successfully carry out the job duties and responsibilities of his or her position. It is expected that each aforementioned supervisor will ensure that timely communications, documentation and performance review have occurred prior to initiating corrective action and/or any recommendation for dismissal.

PRIOR TO INSTITUTING ACTION

Prior to instituting corrective action and/or dismissal as described in the sections that follow, efforts to resolve the problem should be attempted.

For performance-related issues, supervisors are responsible for counseling individuals as deficiencies in job duties occur. If deficiencies continue, counseling memos should be issued to the appointee. The documentation, in the form of a counseling memo should clearly identify the problem area(s), the expected standards, and refer to any previous discussions the supervisor has had with the appointee. The supervisor should follow-up with the appointee at an appropriate interval, informing him or her whether the deficiency has been corrected or further improvement is required.

Performance reviews should appropriately address any deficiencies that required documentation. If during the course of the performance review it is determined that previously acknowledged deficiencies still exist or performance continues to be unsatisfactory, corrective action should be instituted.

For actions that involve serious misconduct, such as those involving the health and safety of other University employees, or that may involve the misuse of University property, it may be appropriate to initiate corrective action and/or dismissal immediately.

TYPES OF CORRECTIVE ACTION AND DISMISSAL

Corrective actions include written warning with consequence, written censure, suspension without pay, or demotion. Corrective action shall normally be taken in progressive steps, beginning with a written warning, except when corrective action is the result of conduct which an appointee knows or reasonably should have known was unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory conduct may include but is not limited to dishonesty, theft or misappropriation of University property, fighting on the job, insubordination, acts endangering others, sexual harassment or other serious misconduct.

Written warning is a formal communication that informs the appointee of a deficiency in performance or an incident of misconduct. A written warning contains not only the specifics of the performance or an incident, but also a method for correction and a clear statement of the probable consequence if the deficiency or misconduct is not corrected.

Written censure is a formal reprimand that conveys institutional rebuke. It may be issued to an appointee for performance or conduct the appointee knows or reasonably should have known was inappropriate or unsatisfactory. Written censure informs the appointee of the serious nature of the event. A written notice of intent must precede the issuance of a written censure.

Suspension is debarment without pay from the appointee's responsibilities for a stated period of time. An appointee may be suspended for performance or conduct the appointee knows or reasonably should have known was inappropriate or unsatisfactory. A written notice of intent to suspend must precede the issuance of a written notice of suspension.

Demotion is a temporary or indefinite reduction in rank, step, and/or salary. An appointee may be demoted for performance or conduct the appointee knows or reasonably should have known was inappropriate or unsatisfactory. A written notice of intent to demote must precede the issuance of a written notice of Suspension. For non-Senate academic appointees who are subject to peer review for performance evaluation, demotion for unsatisfactory work performance shall involve the regular peer review process.

Dismissal is the termination of employment initiated by the University prior to the ending date of appointment. An appointee may be dismissed for continued poor performance as a consequence of a previous written warning. An appointee may also be dismissed without previous written warning or as a result of conduct the appointee knows or reasonably should have known was unsatisfactory or inappropriate. In both cases, a written notice of intent to dismiss must precede the issuance of a written notice of dismissal.

For non-Senate academic appointees who are subject to peer review for performance evaluation, dismissal for unsatisfactory work performance shall involve the regular peer review process.

PROCEDURES

Corrective action or dismissal as defined by this policy is subject to review and approval of the Vice Provost for Academic Personnel.

A. INVESTIGATORY LEAVE

An appointee may be placed on an immediate investigatory leave with pay without prior written notice for the purpose of reviewing or investigating charges of misconduct or dereliction of duty, which, in the judgment of the supervisor, requires removal of the appointee from responsibilities and/or University premises. Such investigatory leave must be confirmed in writing to the appointee normally within five working days after the leave is effective. The notice shall include the reasons for and the expected duration of the leave.

B. WRITTEN WARNING

A written warning issued under this policy as a result of continued poor performance, a less than satisfactory performance review, or due to inappropriate or unsatisfactory conduct must state the serious nature of the performance or conduct and a probable consequence appropriate to the circumstance.

C. WRITTEN NOTICE OF INTENT

A written notice of intent shall be provided to the appointee prior to initiating a written censure, suspension without pay, demotion, or dismissal. Notice of intent is not required for a written warning. The notice of intent shall provide:

- the serious nature of the deficiency or conduct;
- the intended action, including any salary consequence of the action;
- proposed effective date;
- reason for the action and or basis of the charges, including copies of pertinent material upon which the intended action was based;
- the appointee's right to respond either orally or in writing within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of issuance of the written notice of intent;
- the name of the person to whom the appointee should respond.

D. WRITTEN NOTICE OF ACTION

Following the review of an appointee's oral or written response, if any, to the notice of intent, a written notice of action shall be issued to the appointee. The notice of action shall be issued within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of issuance of the written notice of intent. Such notice of action shall:

- notify the appointee of the corrective action or dismissal to be taken;
- notify the appointee of the effective date of the action;
- notify the appointee of the right to grieve the action under **APM 140**.

The notice of action may specify corrective action less severe than that described in the notice of intent, or it may specify that no corrective action will be taken; however the notice of action may not include an action more severe than that described in the notice of intent.

E. REPRESENTATION

An appointee may be self-represented or may be represented by another person at any stage of the corrective action or dismissal process.

F. EXTENSION OF TIME

Prior to the expiration of any time limit, extensions may be granted for good cause by the Vice Provost for Academic Personnel.

G. RECORDS

A copy of the written warning, written censure, suspension, demotion, dismissal, the written notice of intent, and a copy of all supporting documents upon which the decision to take corrective action or dismissal was based shall be placed in the appointee's official personnel file. Such materials may be considered in connection with a recommendation or decision in a personnel action involving the individual if the materials are made part of the personnel review by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Personnel. An appointee shall have the right to have inserted into the personnel file any statement or response to these materials in accordance with **APM 160-30**.

H. NOTICE PROCEDURES

Any notice to the appointee pursuant to this procedure shall be deemed conclusive by delivery to the appointee's last known address.

3057: GRIEVANCE PROCESS

A non-Senate academic appointee is entitled to select only one grievance review mechanism (**APM 150-40**). For a non-Senate academic appointee with a term appointment, if the hearing has not commenced by the ending of the appointment, the dismissal becomes a non-reappointment effective at the end of the appointment. The appointee has 30 days from the ending date of the appointment to grieve the non-reappointment (**APM 137, APM 140**). The grievance should be submitted in writing to the Vice Provost for Academic Personnel.