

GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT, EVALUATION AND PROMOTION OF RESEARCH FACULTY

Research faculty represents a key resource for USC. They are USC employees that have appointments in the various departments of the School of Engineering. Their primary responsibilities are to perform research and advise students, and are supported primarily through external research funding. They may also teach one course per year and participate in department activities in limited ways. The purpose of this document is to clarify the procedures used to appoint, renew and promote research faculty. The Faculty Handbook defines the titles Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor and Research Professor.

BASIC CRITERIA

A research faculty member will normally be employed at least 50% of full time at USC. Exceptions to this must be approved by the Department Chair and the Dean of Engineering.

APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Appointments to the research faculty can be made at any time. The mechanism for appointment depends upon the level of the appointment as follows:

Research Assistant Professor

The candidate will forward the following documents to the department:

- Current updated Curriculum Vitae
- List of at least three references from outside USC that includes candidates' primary thesis advisor and if applicable, most recent work supervisor. At least two letters should be from referees with academic appointments.
- A statement of interest that describes the applicants' reasons for desiring this appointment.
- The candidate will prepare a technical presentation no longer than one hour in length to be presented at a department seminar and plan to spend the day on campus meeting with faculty.

The department will identify a tenure-track faculty member who will serve as the candidate's sponsor and will write a letter of reference supporting the appointment. The department will solicit letters of reference and assemble a dossier supporting the candidate's appointment. Eligible academic and research faculty will review the dossier and vote on the candidates' appointment. **At least 1/2 of the eligible faculty members must participate in the vote for it to be official.** Eligible faculty members include all faculty at the rank of assistant professor or research assistant professor and above. The

department chair will review the faculty vote and offer his/her recommendation. The dossier and the recommendations will then be forwarded along with the vote of the eligible faculty to the executive committee of the School of Engineering APT committee for review and recommendation to the Dean of Engineering.

Research Associate Professor / Research Professor

The candidate will forward the following documents to the department:

- Current updated Curriculum Vitae
- List of at least ten references including notable researchers and faculty in the candidate's field familiar with his (or her) accomplishments. Contact information should be included along with e-mail addresses. At least six of the referees on the list should have academic appointments if possible.
- A statement of interest that describes the applicant's reasons for desiring this appointment.
- The candidate should have produced a significant body of excellent research work and acquired a national or international reputation as a leader in the field. Research contributions can be in the form of publications in the refereed literature such as technical journals and conference proceedings, construction of novel engineering systems, and intellectual leadership of a research group. Recent examples that are representative of this work should be submitted to support the appointment.
- The candidate will spend a day on campus meeting with faculty and giving a technical seminar on recent research accomplishments.

The department will form a committee of three department members including at least one tenure-track faculty member and at least one research faculty member. If no research faculty member can serve, a tenure track faculty member may be substituted. The committee will review the reference list submitted by the candidate and select other notable researchers in the field and combine these with the candidate's list. The Department Chair will solicit the letters of reference and assemble a dossier supporting the candidates' appointment. A minimum of eight letters should be received with at least six coming from referees with academic appointments. The faculty committee will prepare a summary document supporting the appointment. Eligible academic and research faculty will review the summary document and dossier and vote on the candidates' appointment. **At least 1/2 of the eligible faculty members must participate in the vote for it to be official.** For appointment to Research Associate Professor, eligible faculty members include all faculty members at the rank of Associate Professor or Research Associate Professor and above. For appointment to Research Professor, eligible faculty members include all faculty members at the rank of Professor or Research Professor. The department Chair will review the faculty vote and offer his/her recommendation. The dossier will then be forwarded along with the vote of the eligible faculty to the executive committee of the School of Engineering APT committee for review and recommendation to the Dean of Engineering.

EVALUATION, RENEWAL AND PROMOTION

A research faculty member is required to complete an Annual Faculty Record (AFR) that summarizes the faculty member's academic activities for the past year. The AFRs will be used for faculty evaluations, that are required at least every three years by university policy. Additional information may be solicited if necessary. Appointments of Research Assistant Professors are for three years and appointments for Research Associate Professors and Research Professors are for six years, **assuming funding is available**. The renewal process will begin at the start of the Fall semester of the last year of the appointment and should be completed at least six months prior to the expiration period of the current appointment. The department Chair will inform all eligible faculty of the research faculty who will be up for reappointment during the coming academic year. Criteria for renewal are based upon the candidate's continuing research contributions and contributions to the academic life of the Department, School of Engineering and University. The faculty member will submit an updated Curriculum Vitae and a personal statement listing past and planned involvement with the Department. In cases of reappointment, the Chair can make the decision unless an eligible faculty member requests a vote. In cases where the Chair is concerned that the level of involvement may be inadequate to justify reappointment, the Chair will establish a faculty committee of three members, composed of at least one tenure-track faculty member and at least one research faculty member, to review the case and make a recommendation to the eligible faculty. If there is no research faculty member who can serve, a tenure-track faculty member may be substituted. A quorum of eligible faculty must vote for or against the reappointment.

The candidate can initiate a consideration for promotion at any time, although promotion is generally not considered until the candidate has served a minimum of five years at a given rank. The procedure for promotion follows along the corresponding lines of the procedure for the initial appointment except that no seminar or campus visit is required. An updated dossier will be prepared by the Department and made available to the eligible faculty members for review prior to voting on the promotion. The dossier will also be forwarded along with the vote of the eligible faculty to the executive committee of the School of Engineering APT committee for review and recommendation to the Dean of Engineering.

PRIVILEGES AND BENEFITS

Research faculty who meet the above criteria for appointment and promotion will have certain rights and benefits. Appointment as a research faculty member is an official change of position, which is governed by the policies defined in the USC Faculty Handbook (<http://policies.usc.edu/>). In addition, a research faculty has the **privilege** to:

- Teach one course per academic year.
- Be a principal investigator on research grants and contracts.
- Chair Ph.D. committees.

- Serve on Ph.D. qualifying and thesis committees.
- Consult in accordance with the policy of the School of Engineering and of the research unit of which they are a member.

For those privileges under the jurisdiction of the Graduate School, The School of Engineering will need to seek approval from the Graduate School in order to make these standard research faculty privileges rather than ones that are only granted by petition on a case-by-case basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition, this ad-hoc committee recommends the following considerations:

- Benefits for research faculty should be brought into line with those of tenure-track faculty and staff. In particular this applies to benefits for part-time research faculty.
- An at-large position on the EFC should be created for research faculty and the representative elected by the research faculty should be allowed to vote on all issues.
- Current research faculty will be grand-fathered with their current rights and benefits. Upon promotion or re-application they will be granted the full rights as described in this document.

Submitted by the ad-hoc committee of the EFC and APT on Research Faculty

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