

# Oklahoma State University Policy and Procedures

**Research Professor Track (Non-Tenure Track)**

**2-0904  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS  
October 2006**

## GENERAL STATEMENT

Research professorships are renewable term, non-tenure track appointments at the rank of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor. These positions will be used to support and enhance research programs and initiatives, and creative activities at Oklahoma State University. The position of research professor will supplement the Research Professional position as described in the Policy Statement to Govern Appointments, Tenure, Promotions, and Related Matters of the Faculty of Oklahoma State University (hereinafter referred to as the Policy Statement), Section 1.5.4.3. These individuals will be expected to develop independent research programs and serve as principal investigator on proposals to external agencies. In hiring into the research professor track, the University looks to attract high quality researchers who hold promise to become engaged in the academic and scholarly activities including but not limited to performing collaborative research with academic faculty; supervising undergraduate or graduate research; serving on departmental or college committees; and organizing, attending, and presenting at professional conferences and seminars. The primary assignment will be research and these individuals will not serve as primary instructors in regular course offerings of departments or degree programs. Instructional activities will be limited to offerings specific to their research expertise and supervision of graduate students as provided for by membership in the Graduate Faculty. The salaries and fringe benefits for research professors are to be paid from external grants and sponsored programs, but not from general (E&G or other appropriated base) funds. Notwithstanding the appointment period, the existence of any research professor position is contingent upon availability of funding as provided below.

Unless otherwise specified, all provisions of the Policy Statement shall apply to research faculty.

The policies and procedures outlined below shall govern when making research faculty appointments.

## RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT

1.1 Research professor appointments are initiated by an academic unit, defined herein as a department, school, or center. Appointments that are sponsored by a center or other multi-disciplinary unit must be co-sponsored by a department or school.

1.2 The sponsoring unit(s) assumes the responsibility of providing research professors with appropriate resources not normally funded by grants and contracts such as space and office support.

1.3 A research program is eligible for a research professor position when it can document that sufficient funds have been awarded to the University and/or to a principal investigator who will become a research professor at Oklahoma State University to support the research program along with the faculty member's salary and fringe benefits. Alternatively, F&A bridge funds as described below may be used to provide start-up salary and fringe while a research professor seeks external funds.

1.4 Academic units in which a research professor resides shall have policies and procedures in place for recruiting, evaluating, and promoting research professors at the ranks of Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor. Appointments to the research professor track shall require scholarly credentials comparable to those of regular tenure or tenure-track faculty at the same academic rank. Whenever recruitment is possible, the academic unit will follow normal procedures for hiring faculty following affirmative action guidelines. However, it is recognized that these positions may be offered to individuals who are already present in the university system. For example, the availability of the position depends on the receipt of a grant awarded to an individual selected by the sponsoring agency- it would not then be possible to search for another person to fill the position.

1.5 Appointment recommendations from academic units must be approved by the appropriate unit administrator(s), dean(s), the Vice President for Research, the Provost, the President, and the Board of Regents.

1.6 Research professor appointments are renewable appointments not subject to the seven-year probationary period applicable to tenure-track faculty. Tenure cannot be awarded to individuals appointed to these titles; however, appointees may apply for a tenure-track position should one become available. The length of appointment for research professors will be determined by the academic unit administrator (i.e. department head, center director, and/or school head) based on the availability of funds. Appointments are renewable, although the University does not accrue any obligation to renew any research professor appointments. Appointments automatically expire at the time specified in the appointment letter, and no further notification is required.

1.7 There will be limits on the number of research professor appointments that can be made within a college, equal to 25% of the total regular, tenured and tenure-track faculty (expressed as FTE). In addition, there will be a campus limit on the number of research professor appointments, not to exceed 15% of the total regular, tenured and tenure-track faculty (expressed as FTE).

## SALARY AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

2.1 Initial salary offers to research faculty will not exceed those of their disciplinary peers at Oklahoma State University holding tenure-track faculty appointments at a given rank, but within the budget of the extramural funding that sponsors the position. The salary and rank awarded to this faculty will be commensurate with experience and university standards.

2.2 Research professors will participate in the annual Appraisal & Development process and be evaluated by unit administrators and deans using guidelines developed by the sponsoring academic unit(s). It is envisioned that the criteria for performance appraisal will be similar to those for regular, tenure-track faculty except that research productivity and grantsmanship will be the primary performance indicators.

2.3 Salary increases based on merit and promotion to a higher rank will parallel those for regular university employee's contingent upon availability of funds within the budget of the extramural funding used to support the position.

## REAPPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION

3.1 Continued employment of a research professor during the term of appointment will depend on the availability of external funding. If reappointment is desired, an application for reappointment is required prior to the end of the contract period. Reappointment is contingent upon satisfactory performance as determined through performance appraisal and the availability of external grant funds and/or bridge funds.

3.2 Research Assistant Professors and Research Associate Professors will be eligible to seek promotion to Research Associate Professor and Research Professor, respectively, after five years of service in rank according to guidelines for promotion developed by the sponsoring academic unit(s).

## BRIDGE FUNDING

4.01 The University will develop budgetary policies and procedures for establishing a "bridge fund" from F&A monies accrued by the University from external grants and contracts. The bridge fund will be used to provide start-up as needed for new

appointments and to support existing research professors in the event of a break in the continuity of external funding.

## RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

5.1 Research professors will participate in all usual employment benefits sponsored by the University. They shall not be eligible to participate in sabbatical leaves.

5.2 Membership in the Graduate Faculty may be extended to research professors. Privileges regarding faculty governance at the academic unit level shall be determined by the unit(s) in which the research professor resides. Individuals may be afforded the opportunity to serve on departmental, college, and University committees except for Faculty Council, Graduate Faculty Council, and those committees that confer voting privileges on matters of reappointment, promotion, and tenure of tenure track faculty members.

5.3 Termination of employment before the expiration of the period of appointment, except by resignation, retirement, or a lack of funding will only be for good cause shown as described in the Policy Statement, Sections 1.1.4 (Academic Freedom), 1.11 (Resignations), 1.12 (Administrative Suspensions), 1.13 (Disciplinary Actions), and 1.14 (Termination of Appointments).

## PROGRAM REVIEW

6.01 The Vice President for Research, or his/her designee, will periodically (at least every five years) review the status of the research professor program at OSU before Faculty Council. Suggestions for modifying this policy to improve the research professor program may be considered at such times.

Approved by:  
Faculty Council, May 2004  
Council of Deans, January 2005  
OSU Board of Regents, January 2006