

Appendix 10: Non-Faculty Academic Titles

Dartmouth College and the Geisel School of Medicine recognize the important contributions made to our academic community by individuals who are not faculty, but are intimately engaged in the academic (as opposed to administrative) aspects of the School. These non-faculty academics may be trainees (“postdocs”) or longer-term employees (Research Scientists/Distinguished Fellows). They may be employed by either Dartmouth College or by recognized affiliates of Geisel (e.g., D-H or the WRJ VAMC), but in all cases, the titles bestowed are academic titles provided through Dartmouth College.

Postdoctoral Scholars: Postdoctoral scholars include both Research Fellows (supported by NRSA or training grant mechanisms) and Research Associates (supported by other intra- and extramural sources). “A postdoctoral scholar is an individual who has received a doctoral (or equivalent) degree and is appointed for a limited period of time of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path. The primary purpose of a postdoctoral scholar is to engage in advanced study and training; in some cases teaching may be part of that training. Postdoctoral scholars may be expected to supervise and mentor other trainees (e.g., graduate or undergraduate students involved in research).” (Council on Sponsored Activity, 2012). Salaries are determined by support mechanism and experience.

a. Research Associate: This title is used when appointing postdoctoral scholars. The appointee receives a specific title (Research Associate A, Research Associate B, or Research Associate C) based on the length of employment, as defined by the Office of Human Resources. As postdoctoral scholars, Research Associates are expected to have a transient employment with the College, typically fewer than six (6) years. No further delineation of rank (e.g., Senior Research Associate) is available. In some cases, Research Associates may progress to a position as Research Scientist, Research Assistant Professor, or tenure-track professor. Appointments to the Research Associate position do not require a formal search; position descriptions are based upon the needs of the mentor with whom they train and salaries are commensurate with both community norms of the sponsoring entity and market metrics. Research Associates are not members of the Faculty.

Individuals in doctoral programs may be hired as research associates prior to actual award of their terminal degrees, but in such cases the doctoral institution (not simply the individual) must provide assurance that the candidate has completed all requirements towards the degree.

In some cases, individuals who hold non-terminal Master’s rather than doctoral or terminal Master’s, degrees may be qualified to be hired as research associates.

b. Research Fellows: As with Research Associates, Research Fellows are transient members of the Dartmouth Community. Note that the Internal Revenue Service does not consider Research Fellows to be employees since their presence at an institution is to obtain training rather than to provide services. As such, although wages are subject to Federal Income Tax (FIT), they are not subject to The Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA; Social Security and Medicare). For payroll convenience and in order to facilitate allocations of benefits, wages are to be reported on a W-2 Form.

Research Scientist (unprefixed, Senior, or Principal)

This title can be given to individuals who perform essential roles in the research enterprise of individual laboratories (i.e., under the auspices of a faculty sponsor), in institutional cores, or in providing support for broad-based institutional initiatives through roles in data analysis and assessment. Some such individuals may function as managers of individual labs, managers of core services, or analysts of institutional data that is used either internally or externally (e.g., in support of major extramural programs). In most cases, such individuals will hold a doctoral or equivalent terminal degree; for (unprefixed) Research Scientists, a Master's degree may be appropriate or even preferable. Research Scientists (unprefixed, Senior, or Principal) are not members of the Faculty; they are full-time professionals recruited to work in program areas defined by the faculty. They are not expected to pursue *independent* research beyond the scope of faculty programs. The faculty is ultimately responsible for the direction and quality of the research activity, according to universal norms of publication and relevance. Research Scientists (at all levels) may, upon approval by the appropriate Dean, be given eligibility to serve as PI or Co-I on research grants and proposals.

New appointments to the rank of (unprefixed) Research Scientist for those supported from limited (e.g., individual investigator) research programs will not require a national search. National searches are strongly encouraged for new appointments to Senior or Principal Research Scientist positions that reflect broader responsibilities (e.g., directors of institutional cores). Appointments are made by the relevant Dean at the recommendation of a department Chair, to a renewable term.

Senior Research Scientist: Individuals employed as Research Scientists who assume a higher level of responsibility in terms of personnel management and/or in providing key services to the institution as a whole may, upon the approval of the sponsoring Dean, be promoted to Senior Research Scientist. Promotion (or initial appointment) to Senior Research Scientist is justified based on the level of responsibilities and competence. There is no standard timing for promotion, and the recommendation for advancement will be made following an internal review of performance with three letters from referees external to their specific lab/work group (they may also be external to the institution). Senior Research Scientists may also hold titles such as Director or Technical Director of a Core or Institutional Service.

Senior Research Scientists are expected to maintain professional standing in their fields, as made evident through publications, external activity, and/or professional service. Senior Scientists are expected to take on supervisory duties and to participate fully in obtaining funding for research.

Principal Research: Promotion (or appointment) to Principal Research Scientist can follow demonstration of professional leadership and productivity, in conjunction with three letters from referees external to their specific lab/work group (they may also be external to the institution) and recommendation by the appropriate internal reviewing body of the individual academic unit to its Dean. Principal Research Scientists are expected to take on supervisory duties and to participate fully in obtaining funding for research, and are also expected to have greater external visibility than Senior Research Scientists. Principal Research Scientists may also hold titles such as Director or Technical Director of a Core or Institutional Service.

Distinguished Fellows (*of Sponsoring Department, Center, Institute*).

This title may be awarded to a *highly* limited number of individuals who have exceptional national/international stature in their given field of endeavor, but do not meet criteria for a faculty rank. Distinguished Fellows are not members of the Faculty. The decision to recommend the title of Distinguished Fellow rests with the appropriate Dean and must be approved by the appropriate mechanism for the employing school and by the Provost.

It is expected that such individuals will be supported from extramural funds. Appointments for Distinguished Fellows will be limited to a three-year term, which may be renewed. It is expected that these individuals will, in nearly all cases, be targeted hires and thus be eligible for a waiver from a national search with respect to EO/AA policies. However, any individual hired as a Distinguished Fellow who does not meet waiver criteria must be identified by a national search and hired following standard Dartmouth College search protocols. Distinguished Fellows must be employed by Dartmouth College while they hold this title. Distinguished Fellows may be named in association with an Institute or Center that itself does not have the ability to make academic appointments, but such individuals must also have an affiliation with an academic department. In such cases, the Center may bear the financial responsibility for the hire, as well as the administrative responsibility for executing the search and day-to-day support for the academic endeavors of the Distinguished Fellow. However, the Department will have responsibility for other administrative processes pertinent to such employees, such as payroll authorization smart forms, visa processing, and reappointments.

Support: In most cases, support for Research Associates, Research Scientists, and Distinguished Fellows is expected to derive from extramural sources, but in a limited number of instances support may be drawn from central funds (e.g., to support core institutional services). As Research Scientists are considered long-term employees, it is expected that they will receive annual evaluations, which would be submitted by the faculty sponsor to the department Chair and the relevant Dean. At this level, Research Scientists are not required to have a reputation for their work outside of the institution, although external reputation may be a critical component of advancement to senior or principal rank.

Benefits:

Non-faculty academics (NFAs; e.g., individuals who hold titles of Research Associate, Research Scientist, or Distinguished Fellow) employed by Dartmouth College will be considered members of the Staff with respect to benefits provided by Dartmouth College with the following exceptions:

- a. Hiring process does not go through DORR, and annual staff evaluations are not required for NFAs.
- b. Individuals who moved to these positions from other positions at Dartmouth and who previously held benefits currently afforded only to faculty can have these benefits grand-fathered (e.g., 7% benefit credit).
- c. Research Associates, Research Scientists, and Distinguished Fellows are afforded family leave according to the [Geisel Policies on Family Leave for Faculty](#).

d. The Dean, at his/her discretion, may set annual salary increases to follow pools set for faculty.

NFAs who are employed by affiliates of Geisel (D-H, the WRJ VAMC) should consult their own Human Resources Offices for information on benefits.

Letters of Reference:

Three letters of reference are required for promotion or appointment to the rank of Senior or Principal Research Scientist. Reviewers should be external to the lab/work group with which the research scientist is engaged and may be external to the institution (although this is not mandatory). It is anticipated that most reviewers will be members of the faculty, but if they are non-faculty academics themselves, they must hold a position at equivalent or higher rank to the candidate. Letters should be solicited by the department chair from individuals who have no conflict of interest with the advancement of the candidate. Specifically, the reviewer may not be the PI or co-PI on a grant that provides support to the candidate, although reviewers may include individuals who collaborate with the candidate through large institutional or cross-institutional programs (e.g., program project grants, core grants, IDEA grants).

Criteria for advancement are minimally defined in order to accommodate accomplishments across a wide range of disciplines and roles in which research scientists may be involved. However, all individuals being put forward for promotion/appointment to Senior or Principal Research Scientist should be able to document impact in their given field that extends beyond their own research group and in all but few exceptions beyond Dartmouth as an institution. The mix of accomplishments may vary; impact may be measured in terms of scholarship (e.g., peer-reviewed publications, presentations at regional, national and international meetings), success in garnering extramural support (e.g., role as key personnel; role in writing and/or project planning for major research proposals), intellectual property development (e.g., device development, patents), or engagement (e.g., policy guidelines; assessments that actively alter program mission, goals and performance). Candidates may be engaged in teaching or clinical care, although neither is required.

Chairs who request letters of reference in support of promotion of Research Scientists should provide the specific guidelines for such promotions as provided by the Dean's Office and the candidate's CV. As with members of the faculty, candidates being considered for promotion/appointment as Senior/Principal Research Scientist are encouraged to use the personal statement section of the Geisel CV template to define the impact of their work in their field such that an informed academician outside of the candidate's specific area would be able to assess their accomplishments.

