

**Procedures & Criteria for Submitting Recommendations to the
Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Faculty for
Appointment and Promotion of Research Professionals**

The Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology encourages the appointment and timely promotion of qualified individuals who can contribute to the research mission of the department as Research Professionals. The rank can be Assistant, Associate, or Senior Research Scientist (Biochemist, Molecular Biologist, Structural Biologist, Bioinformatics, etc.) depending upon the qualifications of the candidate. The official Guidelines for Appointment and Promotion of Research Professionals are given in the Appendix and were taken from the following UGA/OVPR website.

<http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/rpph/forms/rpapg.html>

The following general statements are taken from the above Guidelines.

“Appointment and promotion of full-time research professionals at the UGA are based on the scholarship of the candidates. Scholarship, both a science and an art, extends knowledge through a public demonstration of disciplined inquiry and creative effort. Persons in these positions are not eligible for tenure. Otherwise, research professionals enjoy the same privileges and status as tenured or tenure-track faculty.

Evidence of excellence in research or other creative activity includes, but is not limited to: books, reviews, monographs, bulletins, articles, and other scholarly works published by reputable journals, scholarly presses, and publishing houses that accept work only after rigorous review and approval by peers in the discipline; success in competing for grants and contracts subjected to rigorous peer review and approval to finance the development of ideas; citations of research in scholarly publications; prizes and awards for excellence of work; and membership on important scientific expeditions or membership on teams making artistic recordings of important events or engaging in the delivery of technology through project development. Other supporting evidence may include professional activities within one’s discipline, professional associations, and learned societies.

Appointment to and promotion within the research professional ranks includes consideration of years in rank and levels of experience and accomplishment. To be eligible for a research professional appointment, a person must have obtained the terminal degree awarded in one’s discipline. Full-time research professionals are usually supported from grants or contracts. Consequently, renewal of appointment and salary level usually depend on the successful renewal of outside support. Appointments and promotions require approval by the Board of Regents”.

The criteria for appointment to the three ranks and of promotion, summarized in the Appendix, are taken from the posting of the Office of the Vice President for Research. The department considers these as minimum qualifications for appointees, and faculty members must follow the following procedures in preparation for a faculty vote on the candidate.

Initial Appointment

1. External letters, three for appointment to the rank of Assistant Research Scientist and four (minimum) for appointment to the rank of Associate and Senior Research Scientist, are to be solicited by the sponsoring faculty member or the Head. The Appointment and Promotion Guidelines for Research Professionals (Appendix) state the following for external evaluations. *“Obtain four letters (only three in the case of an assistant research professional) from persons who can provide a critical, detailed evaluation of the candidate’s work. As a rule do not solicit letters from the candidate’s former major professor, close associates, or friends. Obtain letters from disinterested individuals who know the candidate professionally and preferably through publications, presentations, or artistic creations and performances. Request a critical evaluation of the candidate; do not solicit supporting letters.”*
2. The faculty member nominating an individual for appointment as a Research Professional must write a 1-2 page letter to the Head in which: the appointment is recommended, the qualifications of the candidate for the position are summarized, the source(s) of funding for the position is given, the minimum time for which funding is available is stated, and the lab/office(s) to be used by the individual are listed.
3. The candidate or applicant for the position is expected to give a research seminar with advance notice to the faculty.
4. The nominating faculty member should submit a dossier containing the following material to the Head’s office at least one week before the scheduled faculty meeting at which the discussion and vote will occur: a cover letter recommending the appointment (see no. 2 above), the external letters, and an updated cv of the candidate.
5. It is the responsibility of the Head’s office to distribute the dossier electronically or via hard copy to the faculty at least 24 hours before the faculty meeting.
6. During the faculty meeting, the Head will ask the faculty member nominating the candidate to review the individual’s credentials and then invite faculty discussion and questions.
7. Following the discussion, a written ballot will be distributed to each faculty member, and a current or former representative(s) of the Faculty Senate or University Council will be asked to collect and count the ballots.
8. If a majority of the faculty votes approval, including absentee ballots that must be submitted within one week after the faculty meeting, the Head obtains approval for the hire from the Equal Opportunity Office to issue an offer, then prepares a cover letter to accompany the dossier to the Dean of the Franklin College of Arts & Sciences with a recommendation and a summary of the faculty vote. The Dean, in turn, will forward it to the Office of the Vice President for Research with a recommendation.

Promotion

With the following exceptions, the above steps pertain to Promotion as well. The Research Professional desiring promotion must submit a letter to the Head, with an endorsement by the faculty member in whose lab the person is assigned, along with an updated cv, no later than March of each year. The Head will distribute the material to the faculty at least 24 hours before the next scheduled faculty meeting, and a discussion and vote on whether to request letters will appear on the agenda of the faculty meeting. If the faculty approves requesting reference letters on behalf of the candidate by a majority vote, the Head will solicit such letters consistent with the Appointment and Promotion Guidelines for Research Professionals (see below).

“A research professional may be considered for promotion after the required time in rank has been completed. Research professionals who have been informed in writing that their contracts will not be renewed following a specified year will not be reviewed for promotion. Generally, activities should occur in parallel with faculty promotion procedures. It is important for the candidate and the institution that the dossiers are well-prepared and that review committees evaluate each recommendation for promotion on the merits of the case presented following these Guidelines.

Initial Consideration

In order to receive initial consideration for promotion, an eligible research professional must request that he/she be considered and such a request suffices to receive initial consideration. Each year, the promotion unit head will convene appropriate unit members to consider those individuals who should be evaluated for promotion. Based on an updated curriculum vitae and related information, the unit members will decide by formal vote whether or not to proceed with the promotion process for those eligible research professionals who have requested consideration. The unit head is responsible for informing affected research professionals within a week of the departmental vote on whether or not they will be reviewed for promotion.

If the initial determination is positive, and unless the candidate requests in writing otherwise, then the unit head proceeds with the full evaluation process and external letters may be sought.

Assistant research professionals who are in their sixth year and who have not been previously turned down for promotion must be reviewed for promotion unless they request not to be reviewed.”

The faculty will review the letters and an updated cv from the candidate at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting in early Fall. The Head must make this material available at least 24 hours before the faculty meeting. Following a discussion, the faculty will vote with the ballots being counted by representatives from the Faculty Senate and/or University Council. A majority vote of the faculty, including absentee ballots that must be submitted within one week after the meeting, is required before the dossier is submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Research.