

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT ON RESEARCH AND EXTENSION
PROFESSIONAL STAFF POSITIONS FOR
THE DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND VETERINARY
MEDICINE
AND THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH**

AT

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Purpose

A comprehensive university requires a cadre of personnel who are able to devote full time to research and extension. The purpose of this document is to establish a consistent set of titles for such positions and to establish promotion criteria for the positions. Existing procedures are to be used for establishing positions, advertising vacancies, and filling positions. Affirmative action regulations apply to these positions, except that there are no advertising requirements for the Postdoctoral Associate.

Policy

All regulations of Mississippi State University concerning employment and promotion must adhere to the By-Laws and Policies of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (1970, with subsequent amendments). Every person employed by the University is expected to meet high standards of professional integrity, collegiality and objectivity, and to further the goals of his/her unit(s) and the University. In addition, a person of research/extension rank must have an appropriate degree, or its equivalent in training and experience; a strong commitment to higher education, and in particular to the mission of Mississippi State University; and a willingness to assume the responsibilities and obligations appropriate to a professional university employee.

Position Titles

Four levels of appointment are to be used for professional (support/service) positions:

Research/Extension Associate I
Research/Extension Associate II
Research/Extension Associate III
Senior Research/Extension Associate

Personnel appointed to these positions should be involved in research/extension support.

The final appointment available as a Research Position is that of:

Postdoctoral Associate

This position is available for recent recipients of the doctorate who desire to work with a particular faculty member, or in a particular research program, for a limited period of time, normally not exceeding three years.

Procedure

General Criteria for Appointment to Research/Extension Positions

A. RESEARCH/EXTENSION ASSOCIATE

1. Beginning with a Bachelors degree:

A professional (support/service) employee with a bachelors can begin work at Associate I.

To begin at Associate II, one must meet the above requirements, have a minimum of 3 years of relevant experience and the equivalent to a masters degree¹.

To begin at Associate III, one must meet the above requirements, have a minimum of 6 years of relevant experience and the equivalent to a masters degree¹.

2. Beginning with a Masters degree:

A professional (support/service) employee with a masters degree and a minimum of 1 year of relevant experience and demonstrated competency can begin work at Associate II.

To begin at Associate III, one must have a masters degree and a minimum of 3 years of experience.

To begin at Senior Associate, one must have a masters degree and a minimum of 6 years of experience.

3. Beginning with a Doctoral degree:

A professional (support/service) employee with a doctorate degree with 2 years of relevant experience and demonstrated competence can begin work at Associate III.

To begin at the Senior Associate, one must have a doctorate degree and a minimum of 3 years of relevant experience.

B. POSTDOCTORAL ASSOCIATE

1. Postdoctoral Associate:

A recent recipient of the doctorate who wishes to further his/her experience in research/extension or creative endeavors, and who shows potential for eventual contributions in research/extension or creative endeavors.

The University recognizes achievement of research/extension personnel by advances in rank. For this reason, promotion is never granted routinely for simple satisfactory accomplishment. Rank also reflects comparable stature with others in similar disciplines in other university settings. Promotion is based on performance and demonstrated competence and not on length of service, but a reasonable time must elapse for the individual to demonstrate competence and have it confirmed by periodic evaluation. Professional achievement elsewhere will be considered for promotion.

Suggested Performance Standards of Professional Activities

In every case, the performance of research/extension personnel will be judged by all parties involved in promotion decisions on the basis of written policy statements or criteria (i.e., specific requirements) developed by the specific units with which the individual is associated. All criteria should be based on the application of the highest professional standards associated with the university work. Some suggested items to consider in establishing evaluative criteria at the unit level follow.

Annual Evaluation and Reviews of Research/Extension Personnel

On an annual basis, each department head or appropriate officer and each of his/her employees in research/extension positions will agree in writing to the employee's objectives, responsibilities, and expectations. This written agreement must be consistent with the promotion criteria for research/extension positions of the department, specific unit and the University. This agreement will be reviewed by the next appropriate administrator, and a copy placed in the employee's promotion file. If the department head and employee cannot reach an agreement, the matter will be referred to the next appropriate administrator.

An annual performance review, based on the predetermined agreement, will be conducted by the department head or appropriate officer and each research/extension employee in his/her department before the budget is made for the next year or when specified by the central administration of the University, whichever occurs first. A copy of this review, signed by both parties, will be reviewed by the next appropriate administrator and placed in the employee's promotion file. The employee may attach a dissenting statement to all copies of this review.

A permanent, confidential file for each research/extension employee is to be maintained by the department head or appropriate officer. No record in the file is to be added, changed, or withdrawn without the knowledge of both parties. The responsible administrative officer will make all pertinent information available to the appropriate individuals when the employee is a candidate for promotion, or when the information is needed in an appeals or grievance case.

Procedures for Promotion of Research/Extension Personnel

The promotion of Research/Extension Associates will be initiated by a letter from the supervisor with supporting documentation as appropriate, and must be approved by signature through the Vice President's level.

General Criteria for Promotion of Research/Extension Positions

To be promoted from Associate I to Associate II, one must have a minimum of 3 years of relevant experience, an average overall rating of satisfactory or higher on each of the last three annual evaluations and a masters degree or equivalent¹.

To be promoted from Associate II to Associate III, one must have a minimum of 3 years of relevant experience in the previous rank, an average overall rating of satisfactory or higher on each of the last three annual evaluations and a masters degree or equivalent¹.

To be promoted from Associate III to Senior, one must have minimum of 3 years of relevant experience in the previous rank, an average overall rating of satisfactory or higher on each of the last three annual evaluations and a masters degree.

Schedule for Promotion Decisions

Departmental recommendations must be submitted to the appropriate dean or director by January 15 of each year.

Recommendations by deans or directors must be submitted to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development or the Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine by February 15 of each year.

Recommendations of the Vice Presidents must be submitted to the President by March 10 of each year.

Official notification, in writing, will be sent by the President, or his/her designated officer, to research/extension personnel no later than April 1, or as soon as possible after that date.

Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed every four years or as needed by the [Vice President for Research and Economic Development](#) and the [Vice President for the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine](#) with recommendations for revisions presented to the President. Input may be provided to the Vice Presidents by Human Resources Management.

¹ Items which may be used to demonstrate equivalency include, but are not limited to: a second bachelor's degree, professional certifications, continuing education units (CEU's) earned, advanced training/workshops completed, graduate courses completed, current progress toward an masters degree, and related work experience.

Submitted by:

/s/ David R. Shaw
Vice President for Research &
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2-2-11
Date

Reviewed by:

/s/ Jerome A. Gilbert
Provost & Executive Vice
President

2-2-11
Date

/s/ Gregory A. Bohach
Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry and
Veterinary Medicine

2-2-11
Date

/s/ R. Hart Bailey
Chair, Faculty Senate

2-3-11
Date

Recommend Approval:

/s/ Gregory A. Bohach
Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry and
Veterinary Medicine

2-2-11
Date

/s/ David R. Shaw
Vice President for Research &
Economic Development

2-2-11
Date

/s/ Lesia Bryant
Director, Internal Audit

2-4-11
Date

/s/ Joan L. Lucas
General Counsel

2-14-11
Date

Approved:

/s/ Mark Keenum
President

2-28-11