

Faculty Titles and Ranks

I. Hiring Authority

The Mississippi Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) empowers the IHL Commissioner and the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi to make all appointments and promotions of faculty and staff, with the exceptions indicated in section 401 of the IHL Policies and Bylaws.

II. Overview of Faculty Categories

Actively employed faculty members at the University of Mississippi have primary appointments in one of the following categories: **Regular, Support, and Research Faculty**. These categories reflect the principal duties of the faculty members. Those faculty members in the Support and Research Faculty categories have a prefix associated with their title and are not eligible for tenure. Additionally, the University recognizes **Emeritus Faculty**.

A large subset of the faculty is also referred to as the **professorial faculty** or **professorial ranks**. This is defined below as faculty members, in any of the above categories, who hold a rank of assistant, associate, or (full) professor.

III. Contracts and Terms of Employment

A faculty member (whether Regular Faculty, Support Faculty, or Research Faculty) who receives and signs a contract with the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning is considered a **contractual employee**. Faculty contracts will state the term of the appointment and the title. The length of the contract is dependent upon the position held and may be changed as that position changes, as a person changes positions, and/or at the discretion of the University. Most faculty members are employed on 9-month contracts, though some faculty, including those who hold department chair and other administrative positions, may be hired on 12-month contracts. **Permanent** faculty members are hired on either a 9- or 12-month contract.

Temporary faculty members may be employed for periods ranging from a semester to 12-months. They receive an initial appointment letter, which states the responsibilities and term of employment. Temporary faculty members may be reappointed under the same general conditions via administrative forms. A temporary faculty member will receive a contract only if the employment is 50% or greater in time.

Whether employed on a contractual basis or not, faculty may be employed **full-time** or **part-time**. Additionally, a University employee may be employed part-time as a faculty member and part-time in some other capacity by the University. **Adjunct** faculty members are employed less than 50% time by the University.

Contractual faculty members may become tenured, as explained below. **Tenure** is defined as continuing employment that may be granted to a faculty member after a probationary period upon nomination by the Institutional Executive Officer for election by the Mississippi Board of Trustees. Tenured faculty members are protected from dismissal except for those reasons set forth in the Section 403 of the IHL

Board Policies and the University's Tenure Policy. Faculty members are tenured to a department unless otherwise designated by the Board.

Non-tenure track contractual faculty members above the rank of Instructor receive the benefit of advanced notification of the intent not to renew their annual contract. This is explained in the policy for the Termination of Non-tenured Faculty.

IV. Qualifications for Employment

Upon receiving an offer of employment, faculty member candidates are required to provide evidence of academic credential for the positions to which they will be employed. This includes providing a final copy of transcripts (with certified English translations, if necessary) indicating conferral of degrees. The degrees that qualify an individual for employment as a faculty member must be consistent with the guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

V. Faculty Ranks

The professorial ranks of faculty include **assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor**, with these ranks being in order of promotion. These ranks can apply to Regular, Support, and Research faculty, as well Emeritus faculty. For each contractual faculty member who receives a professorial-rank appointment the department/unit shall provide the opportunity for promotion and shall provide, or provide access to, approved promotion guidelines that describe the research or creative achievement, teaching, and service expectations to be met in order to be recommended for promotion to a higher rank.

A second promotional ladder of faculty ranks includes Instructor, Lecturer, and Senior Lecturer. Except for cases where these appointments are indicated to the individual to be temporary appointments, each department/unit that employs instructors and lecturers shall provide the opportunity for promotion and shall provide, or provide access to, approved guidelines that describe the expectations to be met in order to be recommended for promotion to a higher rank.

Additional faculty ranks, which have no promotion sequence, are Artists-in-Residence and Writers-in-Residence.

VI. Faculty Titles

Professorial faculty titles have the following format: *Prefix-Rank-Professor-Discipline*. The absence of a prefix indicates that the individual is a member of the Regular Faculty and is tenured or in the tenure track. Examples of faculty titles include

Assistant (rank) Professor of History (discipline)

Clinical (prefix) Associate (rank) Professor of Education (discipline).

A *Prefix* must precede Support and Research Faculty categories. These *Prefixes* include the following: Clinical, Instructional, Research, of Practice (as a following descriptor), Visiting, Acting, and Adjunct.

The *Discipline* descriptors are usually aligned with the name of an academic department, but may refer to disciplines for which there is no academic department with the same name, provided that promotion

guidelines exist, which apply to that discipline, and a responsible academic administrator is identified for annual performance reviews and the evaluation of promotion requests.

VI. A. Regular (Tenured and Tenure Track) Faculty

Regular Faculty members perform the functions of teaching, research or creative activities, and service and are assigned to an academic unit appropriate for their *Discipline* descriptor. Regular Faculty members are usually hired as assistant professors and enter the tenure track. For example, an assistant professor must serve a probationary period of five years and be reviewed for tenure during his or her sixth year of continuous employment at the University. Regular Faculty members may be hired, particularly at the associate and full ranks, with a reduction in the tenure probationary period, as explained in the Tenure Policy. Regular Faculty members at the Associate and Full ranks are full members of the Graduate Faculty, while those at the Assistant rank are Associate Members of the Graduate Faculty.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR – The beginning rank of professorial status. Permanent full-time faculty members holding this rank are members of the Regular Faculty and are tenured or are accruing time toward tenure. The time an Assistant Professor has served as an Instructor or as an Acting Assistant Professor shall not count toward the tenure probationary time unless a written agreement is reached at the time the person becomes Assistant Professor. When an initial appointment is made to a position which is primarily administrative, but carries with it academic rank of Assistant Professor, specific understanding should be reached at the time of offer with the individual concerned and agreed to in writing by the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Dean, and the academic unit as to whether the individual will be reviewed for tenure at the proper time and what conditions must be met before there is tenure eligibility. Likewise, whenever an administrator is given academic rank at any time following the initial appointment, the same would apply. Any agreement shall be over the Chancellor's signature.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR – The intermediate rank of the three professorial ranks. Permanent full-time faculty members holding this rank are members of the Regular Faculty and are tenured or are accruing time toward tenure. When an initial appointment is made to a position which is primarily administrative, but carries with it academic rank of Associate Professor, specific understanding should be reached at the time of offer with the individual concerned and agreed to in writing by the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Dean, and the academic unit as to whether the individual will be reviewed for tenure at the proper time and what conditions must be met before there is tenure eligibility. Likewise, whenever an administrator is given academic rank at any time following the initial appointment, the same would apply. Any agreement shall be over the Chancellor's signature.

PROFESSOR--The highest professorial rank. Permanent full-time faculty members holding this rank are members of the Regular Faculty and are tenured or are accruing time toward tenure. When an initial appointment is made to a position which is primarily administrative, but carries with it academic rank of Professor, specific understanding should be reached at the time of offer with the individual concerned and agreed to in writing by the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Dean, and the academic unit as to whether the individual will be reviewed for tenure at the proper time and what conditions must be met before there is tenure eligibility. Likewise, whenever an administrator is given academic rank at any time following the initial appointment, the same would apply. Any agreement shall be over the Chancellor's signature.

VI. B. Support (Non-Tenure Track) Faculty

Faculty members in this category are hired primarily to perform a limited range of duties. Support Faculty members are usually assigned teaching or service roles. Support Faculty members may contribute to the University beyond this narrow definition, but their promotion guidelines and annual reviews should emphasize the principal duties. Certain faculty with professorial titles in these categories can be permanent employees and can expect to be offered annual contracts, unless termination notices are provided in a timely manner as outlined in the Termination of Non-Tenured Faculty Policy. Visiting Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, or Artists/Writers-in-Residence are generally considered temporary employees. For these latter appointments, the employment period must be specified in the employment notification and renewal of their appointments is at the discretion of the University.

B.1. Support Faculty

Support Faculty include the following titles and tracks:

B.1.a. Instructor/Lecturer Track

INSTRUCTOR – Persons with the rank of instructor shall be hired for teaching duties but shall not be tenure track. The contracts will be renewable at the discretion of the University.

LECTURER – Instructors who meet departmental, school or college, and institutional criteria may be promoted to the rank of Lecturer. Lecturers are not eligible for tenure, but shall ordinarily be given notice of non-renewal not later than twelve months before the expiration of his or her appointment. Under exceptional circumstances, individuals may be initially appointed as Lecturers. Lecturers are members of the Support Faculty.

SENIOR LECTURER -- Lecturers who meet departmental, school or college, and institutional criteria may be promoted to the rank of Senior Lecturer. Senior Lecturers are not eligible for tenure but shall ordinarily be given notice of non-renewal not later than twelve months before the expiration of his or her appointment. Senior Lecturers are members of the Support Faculty.

B.1.b. Clinical, Instructional, and Of Practice Faculty Track

CLINICAL/INSTRUCTIONAL /Of PRACTICE - The prefix “Clinical” or “Instructional” or the following modifier “of Practice” may be added to the ranks Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. These ranks are not eligible for tenure, but are eligible for promotion. These faculty categories include positions where the primary duties are instruction, including the teaching of practical skills and demonstrating best professional practices or the providing of service to the community at large. The primary qualifications for such positions may include substantial practitioner experience. Clinical/Instructional/Of Practice faculty are members of the Support Faculty and may be eligible to exercise the responsibilities of Associate Members or Instructional Members of the Graduate Faculty.

B.1.c. Artists/Writers in Residence

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE – This position type is held by persons whose professional artistic accomplishments qualify them for appointments to departments in fine and performing arts. Persons holding only this faculty title are members of the Support Faculty and are not eligible for tenure or promotion.

WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE—This position type is held by persons whose literary accomplishments qualify them for appointment to an academic department. Persons holding only this faculty title are members of the Support Faculty and are not eligible for tenure or promotion.

B.1.c. Visiting Faculty

VISITING – The prefix “Visiting” may precede the ranks Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor and is used for professorial faculty from other universities or for qualified professionals who can contribute to the intellectual life of the University through teaching or research. Visiting faculty members have temporary appointments and are members of the Support Faculty. Persons holding the title Visiting may be eligible to exercise the responsibilities of Associate Graduate Faculty.

B.1.e. Acting Faculty

ACTING – The prefix “Acting” may be added to any of the Regular Faculty titles to indicate that the individual employed is performing the duties of the corresponding Regular Faculty rank, but that the appointment is not on a tenure-track basis. Acting faculty members are members of the Support Faculty. Persons holding this title may be eligible to exercise the responsibilities of Associate Graduate Faculty. If a person holding this title is subsequently appointed as a member of the Regular Faculty, the time served while an acting faculty member shall count toward the probationary time toward tenure only if recommended and approved in accordance with the University’s tenure guidelines.

B.1.f. Adjunct Faculty

ADJUNCT – The prefix “Adjunct” is used for persons whose primary responsibilities lie outside the University. The prefix may be used before the titles Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. Adjunct faculty members are members of the Support Faculty. Usually adjunct faculty members derive their principal income from sources outside the University though they may be paid for teaching University classes on a part-time basis. Adjunct faculty members cannot attain tenure. In the event that an adjunct faculty member is appointed to a tenure-track position, the time served while an adjunct faculty member shall not count toward the probationary time toward tenure. Persons holding the title “Adjunct” may be eligible to exercise the responsibilities of Associate Graduate Faculty.

B.1.g. Military Personnel Faculty

MILITARY PERSONNEL, RANK ASSIGNED – For academic purposes, the rank of Professor is assigned to colonels in the Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps and to captains in the Navy who are assigned to duty on the campus. The other ranks are:

Associate Professor--Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Commander, and Lieutenant Commander.

Assistant Professor--Captain, First Lieutenant (Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps), Lieutenant, Lieutenant Junior Grade (Navy).

Instructor--All others in the armed forces who teach classes in R.O.T.C.

Assistant--All others below the above ranks who are in a non-academic capacity.

VI. C. Research (Non-Tenure Track) Faculty Track

Faculty members in this category are hired to perform a limited range of duties. Research Faculty members have the principal assignments of conducting research. Research Faculty members may contribute to the University beyond this narrow definition, but their promotion guidelines and annual reviews should emphasize the primary duties. Research Faculty do not accrue tenure, but are eligible for promotion. While in some cases renewal of appointment is subject to availability of research funds, Research Faculty members should have the expectation of continuing employment unless notified otherwise at the time of their appointment. Persons holding the title Research (Assistant, Associate) Professor may be eligible to exercise the responsibilities of Associate Graduate Faculty. The following ranks exist for Research Faculty.

Research Assistant Professor of (Discipline)

Research Associate Professor of (Discipline)

Research Professor of (Discipline)

The Discipline descriptor may either be a recognized disciplinary field or the major research unit that hires the individual.

VI. D. Emeritus Faculty Status

This title will be conferred automatically upon any faculty member of professorial rank who elects to retire after ten years of faculty service to the University and who meet the criteria for retirement. Also, retirement and emeritus status may be conferred at the discretion of the Provost upon recommendation of the department chair and dean for those faculty members who have rendered meritorious service.

VI. E. Joint and Courtesy Titles

A faculty member may be appointed to two (or more) academic units and have a **joint faculty** title. A joint appointment may involve two Regular Faculty (e.g., tenured/tenure track) appointments or one Regular and one Support or Research (e.g., non-tenure track) appointment. Examples of such joint faculty titles include:

Assistant Professor of DisciplineA and Assistant Professor of DisciplineB, or

Associate Professor of DisciplineA and Research Associate Professor of DisciplineB.

One of these titles (which must be the first one used) is the primary appointment. When one position is tenure track and the other is not, the tenure track appointment must be the first and primary appointment. The primary appointment is used for determining the tenure probationary period and procedures for annual reviews and tenure and promotion reviews. Whereas the chair or director of the primary unit is responsible for tenure and promotion review procedures, input from the faculty and administrators associated with the secondary unit must be included (unless a faculty member opts not to request promotion in the secondary title). In no case should a faculty member be promoted in the secondary title rank without a review by the faculty in the secondary unit.

Generally, the primary appointment will be determined by the budgetary source of the positions and the primary appointment will usually be the initial continuous position held at the University. When an initial appointment is made to a Regular, Support, or Research position carrying with it a secondary faculty appointment, a specific written understanding with the individual concerned should be reached at the time of the offer. The understanding must be reached by both the unit in which the primary

appointment and the unit in which the secondary appointment is made, with each role specified. The understanding must be agreed to in writing by the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Dean or Deans, and the academic units and should indicate whether the joint position is tenure eligible and the guidelines to be used for promotion eligibility. Likewise, whenever an additional appointment is considered at any time following the initial appointment, the same conditions would apply.

In a joint appointment, it is not required that both titles be at the same rank.

If an individual is initially hired as a Support or Research Faculty member, a tenure track title (e.g., a Regular Faculty joint title) cannot be offered to that individual without there being a complete search to fill the Regular Faculty position.

A joint appointment will usually involve portions of the salary and responsibilities for the faculty member coming from the two units. A **courtesy or affiliated appointment**, on the other hand, is an offer of faculty title by one academic or research unit to a faculty member in another academic unit of the University without a requirement of the performance of duties and without a salary component. A courtesy appointment might be made, for example, to foster scholarly interactions among faculty or to enable a faculty member to voluntarily direct graduate students in a second department. No prefix is necessary for such courtesy/affiliated appointments, but the prefix “Affiliated” may be added. Courtesy/affiliated appointments may be offered to faculty at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, instead of treating these as Adjunct appointments.

VI. F. Honorific Faculty Titles

Various named chair or distinguished faculty honorific titles may be added to an individual faculty member based on selection criteria developed within schools and the College. Any such honorific title must be approved by the Provost and Chancellor and should include the term of the honorific title and expectations for the holder. The honorific title will precede the normal part of the individual’s faculty title. For example, the full title might be Distinguished Research Professor of DisciplineA or Named Chair and Professor of DisciplineB. It should be recognized that an honorific title of Named Lecturer can have a different meaning than the Instructor/Lecturer track faculty title, if the honorific Named Lecturer title is combined with a standard faculty title.

VI. G. Graduate Assistants and Graduate Instructors

Graduate students may be employed to perform teaching, research, and service in the categories of Graduate Instructor or Graduate Assistant. Such student employees are part-time, temporary employees and are not considered faculty, except that Graduate Instructors may be counted as fractional instructional faculty in certain reports. Information about the appointment of graduate assistants and graduate instructors can be found in the Policy on the Administration of Graduate Assistantships and Graduate Instructorships.

GRADUATE INSTRUCTOR-- A graduate student who teaches one or more courses and who is responsible for reporting grades in his or her own name. The student may be hired for a term of a semester or an academic year; the termination date will be given on a personnel form.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT--A graduate student who assists the faculty by performing services related to teaching (e.g., a graduate teaching assistant), research (e.g., a graduate research assistant), or service (e.g., a graduate administrative assistant). The student may be ~~is~~-hired for a term of a semester or an academic year (or for a 12-month period, in the case of research assistants); the termination date will be given on a personnel form.