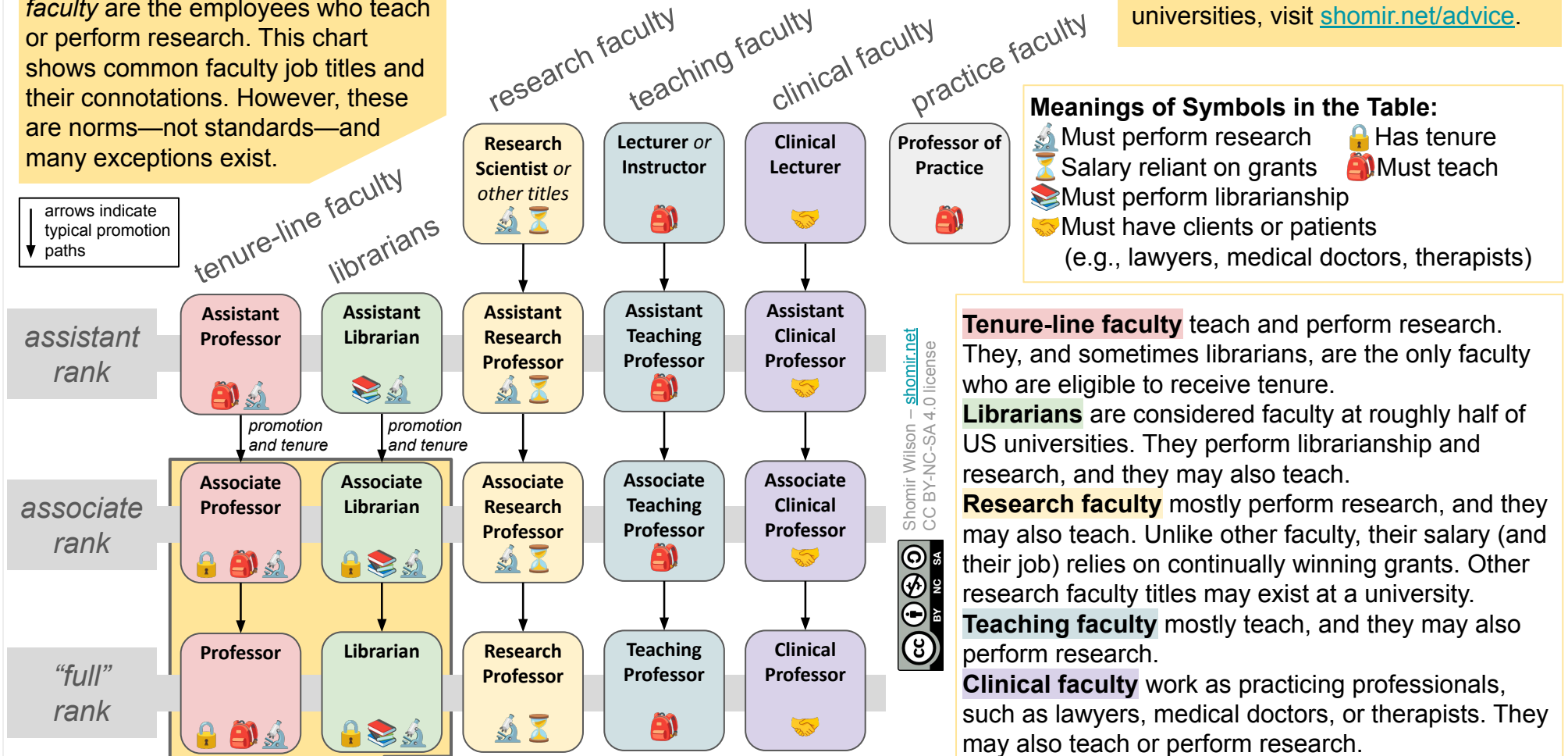


# A Periodic Table of Faculty Job Titles at US Universities

What do all those professors do?

**The Big Picture:** At US universities, *faculty* are the employees who teach or perform research. This chart shows common faculty job titles and their connotations. However, these are norms—not standards—and many exceptions exist.

To learn more about academia at US universities, visit [shomir.net/advice](http://shomir.net/advice).



**Tenure** is a special kind of job security that allows faculty to focus on long-term projects with greater benefits to society. Typically, eligible faculty must apply after a fixed number of years (often six) and must leave the university if they don't get it.

Special modifiers to faculty job titles:

- Adjunct:** Temporary part-time teaching position
- Affiliate:** Has some faculty privileges in a department, but main job is elsewhere
- Distinguished:** Recognized by the university for outstanding performance at the “full” rank
- Emeritus:** Retired, no salary, few or no duties
- Visiting:** Temporary position, mostly teaching

**Practice faculty** had distinguished careers outside of academia prior to becoming faculty. They are hired to teach based on those prior experiences.

Although not shown here, **service** is another set of duties for many faculty. These include serving on university committees and organizing conferences. Higher ranks are expected to perform more service.