The University of Mississippi

Definition of Faculty Ranks

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.

ADJUNCT – The prefix “Adjunct” is used for persons whose primary responsibilities lie outside the University. The prefix may be used before the instructional 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS – The group of University officials composed of the chancellor, vice chancellors, deans, department heads, and department chairs as listed in the General Catalog.

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE – 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.

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.

CLINICAL/INSTRUCTIONAL – The prefix “Clinical” or “Instructional” may precede the ranks Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. These ranks include positions where the primary duties are instruction, including the teaching of practical skills and demonstrating best professional practices or the providing of clinical service to the community at large. The primary qualifications for such positions typically include substantial practitioner experience. Clinical/Instructional faculty members are members of the Support Faculty. Clinical/Instructional faculty members may be eligible to exercise the responsibilities of Associate Members of the Graduate Faculty.

CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEE--A faculty member (whether Regular Faculty, Support Faculty, or Research Faculty), or department head who signs a contract with the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. 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 administrators, including department chairs, are on 12-month contracts, while most faculty members are employed on 9-month contracts. At the end of any contract period, a department chair or other faculty member may be changed from a 12-month basis to a 9-month basis without such a change constituting a breach of contract.

DEPARTMENT CHAIR--A faculty member appointed to coordinate the activities of an academic department and designated as the budgetary officer of the department. Department chairs serve at the will of the Chancellor. Termination of a chair's administrative duties does not affect the person's status as a member of the faculty.
EMERITUS 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.

FACULTY MEMBER--Any person who holds faculty rank. Faculty members are divided into four categories: Regular Faculty, Support Faculty, Research Faculty, and Emeritus Faculty.

FULL-TIME FACULTY--This definition includes (1) faculty fully engaged in teaching university classes, (2) fully employed faculty whose instructional loads are reduced for research or other non-administrative assignments, and (3) fully employed administrative officers in academic units who hold faculty rank.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT--A graduate student who for the period of a semester or a session is paid from the University budget or from external funds for performance of services related to teaching, research, or administration. The title indicates temporary employment, and the termination date will be given on the personnel form.

GRADUATE FACULTY
-- Associate Graduate Faculty. Persons appointed as Assistant Professor who hold the appropriate terminal degree for the discipline in which they are employed and approved members of the Support Faculty and Research Faculty. Associate members may teach graduate courses; direct theses; co-direct dissertations; participate on thesis, dissertation, and examining committees.
-- Full Graduate Faculty. Persons promoted to or appointed as Associate or Full Professor who hold the appropriate terminal degree for the discipline in which they are employed. Full members may teach graduate courses; direct theses and dissertations [the director of a doctoral dissertation or essay must hold a doctorate]; participate on thesis, dissertation, and examining committees; serve on the Graduate Council, if elected.

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 title indicates temporary employment, and the termination date will be given on the personnel form.
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, and the termination date will be given on the personnel form.

INTERIM ADMINISTRATIVE TITLES – On occasion the necessity arises to appoint to an administrative position someone on a temporary basis. Also, some positions must be filled without an appropriate Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity search. In such cases the title used must be preceded by the adjective "Interim." Interim titles must be used temporarily.

JOINT FACULTY APPOINTMENTS -- When an initial appointment is made to a position in either the Research Faculty, Support Faculty, or Regular Faculty 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. The understanding must be agreed to in writing by the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Dean or Deans, and the academic units as to whether the individual will be reviewed for tenure and/or promotion and what conditions must be met before there is tenure/promotion eligibility. Likewise, whenever an additional appointment is considered at any time following the initial appointment, the same conditions would apply. Any agreement shall be over the Chancellor's signature.

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.

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.
PART-TIME FACULTY--This definition includes (1) part-time employees fully engaged in teaching university classes, and (2) full-time employees in other than academic units holding faculty rank.

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE -- An individual who holds a doctoral degree and is engaged in a program of advanced research and training carried out under the guidance of University faculty, but which program does not lead to a graduate degree.

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW -- An individual who holds a doctoral degree and is engaged in an independent program of research and training. The award is of the non-service fellowship type for which no compensation is paid.

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.

REGULAR FACULTY -- The Regular Faculty consists of tenured faculty and tenure-track faculty.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE--Research Associates will generally hold a master's degree and be expected to perform successfully in a professional research role. Funding for Research Associates will often be from grants or other sources besides the general University budget.

RESEARCH FACULTY--The prefix Research may be used with the faculty titles Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor. This title is used for faculty members whose principal assignments are to conduct research. Research Faculty members may not be awarded tenure, but they may be considered for promotion. They have no university governance or voting rights. While in some cases renewal of appointment is subject to availability of research funds, Research Faculty members 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.

**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.

**SUPPORT FACULTY** – Faculty employed for a limited range of duties. They have no university governance or voting rights. They are not progressing toward tenure. They are to assume that their employment ceases in accordance with the terms of the contract in effect unless they are offered a new contract. Support faculty include Instructors, Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Artists in Residence, Writers in Residence, and all professorial titles with the prefixes Visiting, Acting, and Clinical/Instructional.

**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.

**WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE**--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.