

Expectations for Research Faculty in IANR: Annual Academic Performance Evaluation and Progress towards Promotion

Research faculty are promotable through Assistant, Associate, and Full professorial ranks. Research faculty are not eligible for tenure. Those with a research faculty position are often appointed to work on specific project(s) for a limited number of years, and are funded from one or multiple sources. They are faculty members within an academic unit and are expected to function as such, which includes attending faculty meetings and serving, as appropriate, on governance committees. Their position descriptions should be written in a way that describes their unique faculty roles and responsibilities and their expected contributions to the IANR mission. Position descriptions should facilitate professional development pathways toward promotion.

Guidelines for Evaluation of Research Faculty

The annual and promotion evaluations of research faculty are conducted by the academic unit leader and academic unit's promotion and tenure committee regardless of the source of funding for their positions. Academic unit leaders seek input from faculty members whose grants or contracts provide funding for the research faculty member's salary, but the academic unit leader conducts the evaluation.

The annual evaluation and promotion process, expectations for promotion, and timelines for research faculty must be explicit, transparent and equitable. Performance evaluation of those on research faculty lines must be tied to the person's position description. Evaluation must follow the [IANR Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation and Promotion](#), which indicates that promotable positions, whether tenure-track or non-tenure track, follow the same evaluation processes, including peer and unit leader reviews. While the evaluation processes are the same for tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty, the expectations for performance, accomplishments and impacts may differ depending on the position and the expectations for that position. Feedback on performance should be tailored to acknowledge and encourage accomplishments that will lead toward promotion.

Expectations of Research Faculty

Expectations of Assistant Research Professor

Research assistant professors' primary role is to conduct research to accomplish defined tasks for specific project(s) that support their position. They are expected to publish in peer-reviewed journals and communicate their research with the professional community. They may also be tasked to develop scholarly products (e.g., new software, algorithms, maps, new laboratory methods, tools, hardware, etc.), manage facilities, and/or generate other marketable intellectual property. Research assistant professors are expected to provide structured and/or un-structured mentoring and learning/teaching opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students, participate in departmental faculty meetings, serve on university and/or professional society committees, and participate in review panels. Even though seeking external funding might not be required in their position, research faculty are strongly encouraged to contribute to grant writing and/or apply for external funding.

Promotion to Associate Research Professor Rank

Research faculty promoted from Assistant to Associate Professor must demonstrate a steady growth and professional development in the following. This development should be documented through their annual reports of accomplishments and documentation of their annual performance evaluation and progress toward promotion evaluation.

1. Demonstrate independence in developing and contributing to their research program(s) and project(s), and to the research mission of IANR and UNL;
2. Advance and contribute to the project(s) outlined in their position description and under the terms of awarded grants and contracts that provide funding to the position;
3. Author/co-author peer-reviewed publications;
4. Depending on the position requirements, develop scholarly products (e.g., new software, maps, laboratory methods, tools, hardware, etc.), manage facilities, and/or generate other marketable intellectual property;
5. Receive national professional recognition - including invited seminars, conferences, publications citations, service, multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional teams, panels review, etc.;
6. Mentor and provide learning opportunities for students;
7. Be a good citizen of IANR and UNL, participate in faculty meetings, and serve on university and/or professional societies committees following departmental and IANR policies; and
8. Depending on the position description, external funding may be required. Even in cases where external funding is not required, research faculty are strongly encouraged to participate in grant writing and in seeking external funding.

Promotion to Full Research Professor Rank

For promotion from Associate to Research Professor, in addition to the above, the research faculty member should demonstrate leadership, continued growth and professional development, national/international recognition, success in receiving external funding, and development in mentoring and advising students.

Timeframe for Promotion

Faculty must demonstrate that they are able to sustain excellence over time in order to be granted promotion. Regarding promotion to Associate Professor, the UNL Guidelines for the Evaluation of Faculty indicates: "Time-in-rank as an assistant professor is ordinarily at least five years, and typically is six years. Earlier promotion is quite unusual and implies that a candidate has accomplished in the shorter time period what normally would be expected in the longer one." Regarding promotion to full professorial rank the UNL Guidelines document states: "Ordinarily, in most units, it is highly unusual for faculty to move from associate professor to professor in less than seven years."