

**Guidelines for Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion of Fixed Term Faculty  
Department of Epidemiology  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

## **Introduction**

Fixed term faculty include appointments with the prefix-qualifier of “Adjunct”, “Clinical”, “Research”, “Professor of the Practice”, or “Senior Lecturer”. Fixed term faculty members are absolutely vital to the success of the UNC Department of Epidemiology. As the number of fixed term faculty in the department has increased, so has the need to form policies and department culture around these appointments. This document is intended to provide guidance on practices in the Department of Epidemiology relative to fixed term faculty. It is the intention that this collection and recording of norms, examples, precedent and oral history will further communication and understanding, increase transparency in departmental actions and promote career development and the fair and equitable treatment of faculty. It is often difficult to capture issues concerning academic mission, performance and achievement in concrete terms. This guidance will continuously be adjusted and modified and should not be viewed as static or as a legal contract. This document does not supersede University or School Policies.

The majority of fixed term faculty members in the department focus on research. Many fixed term faculty contribute in very important ways to support and enhance research being led by other faculty in the department, while others establish an independent research program with peer reviewed grant support. In addition, some fixed term faculty focus on the teaching mission of the department without involvement in research. Fixed term faculty can make contributions to the teaching mission of the Department of Epidemiology if they desire, and contribute in other ways by providing some service to the Department. However, expectations for teaching and service are much lower for fixed term compared to tenure track faculty.

### **A. Criteria for appointment as fixed-term, non-tenure track at the rank of Research Instructor, Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor.**

Research Instructors hold a doctoral or other professional degree and typically do not have any postdoctoral experience. The expectation is that all salary funds are obtained from grant or other sources of support, and no salary support is provided by the Department.

Research Track Assistant Professors hold a doctoral or other professional degree and may have completed some postdoctoral experience. The expectation is that all salary funds are obtained from grant or other sources of support, and no salary support is provided by the Department.

Associate Professors with fixed term appointments generally had at least 7 years in rank as a Research Assistant Professors. Those proposed for this rank must be able to show how his or her work collectively has led, or is likely to lead to, improved public health or the advancement of science in their discipline. The candidate must demonstrate that they are on a course for national leadership in their discipline. They will have secured peer-reviewed, federal and other sources of funding for research in a Principal Investigator role. Research qualifications are comparable to those of tenure track faculty of the same rank.

Research Professors with fixed term appointments generally have had at least 5 years in rank as Research Associate Professors. This rank is reserved only for those who have demonstrated sustained achievement and outstanding work. Candidates must have obtained national recognition for their research. They will have secured peer-reviewed, federal or other funding for research as senior, principal investigator. Research qualifications are expected to equal those of tenure track faculty of the same rank. Some evidence of teaching and service may also be included, but this is less stringent than that required for faculty in the tenure track.

## **B. Appointment of other fixed term faculty**

In addition to fixed term research appointments, fixed term faculty appointments can be made for faculty members whose focus is teaching, practice or other teaching-related activities (Appendix A). This includes the ranks of lecturer, clinical appointments and Professor of the Practice appointments. These individuals make major contributions to the teaching or practice mission of the Department of Epidemiology. They may or may not construct a research program. These faculty will have at least a masters degree and will have the specific skills needed to meet instructional or practice needs of the department. They are appointed for one year terms at the discretion of the Department Chair.

## **C. Description of process of appointment and re-appointment of research track faculty**

Generally Research Assistant Professors are recruited by other faculty in the department to serve a designated role in a funded research program. A position must be posted and approved prior to recruitment efforts, except in cases where the Department receives permission to waive search requirements from the Equal Opportunity Office. The faculty member who is planning to support the Research Assistant Professor constitutes or forms a search committee. In some instances fixed term faculty in the research track who have their own independent research program are recruited. In those instances there is no “funding faculty member” responsible for their support and the search committee is appointed by the Department Chair.

The Department Chair is presented with information on the candidate including a CV and two letters of reference which meet the specifications of the APT manual. If the new faculty member is to be funded by a faculty member in the Department, a letter from the faculty member guaranteeing salary support for at least one year and providing a summary of the candidate’s skills should also be provided. If the Department Chair decides to support the nomination, she/he will call for a vote from the Department’s assembled tenured Full Professors. This vote is a recommendation to the chair; and the final decision to make the appointment is that of the Department Chair.

Generally, Department of Epidemiology appointments and re-appointments are for two years. Re-appointments are made by the Department Chair in consultation with the assembled Full Professors. Contracts must always be contingent on the continued availability of funds to the Department of Epidemiology from sources other than continuing state budget or permanent trust funds.

## **D. Process for promotion of fixed term faculty**

Appointments and reappointments of Research Assistant Professors, Clinical Assistant Professors, or Lecturers are not reviewed by the School of Public Health Appointments, Promotions and Tenure Committee, but instead receive administrative review at the Department and School level and by the Provost’s Office. Appointments and promotions at the rank of

Research Associate Professor and above are reviewed both at the Department and by the School of Public Health Appointments and Promotions Committee. It is important to emphasize that decisions regarding the promotion of fixed term faculty members are separate from decisions regarding the employment of such individuals. Decisions about employment, including initial appointment and reappointment, remain the sole responsibility and prerogative of the Chair, in consultation with the assembled Full Professors in the department. The University considers the change in rank of a fixed term faculty member to be an initial appointment at a higher rank rather than as a promotion.

The review process for promotion of fixed term faculty runs, as much as possible, in parallel with the process for tenure track faculty. Negative decisions on promotion may occur at the department level or at the School level. It is expected that the Chair and a designated faculty mentor will provide the guidance and mentoring that is necessary for the individual faculty member. The Chair will make available to each faculty member written copies of the University, School, and Departmental criteria and process for promotion of fixed term faculty. These materials will be presented to faculty members at the time of their initial employment.

After consultation with the assembled tenured Full Professors, the Chair forwards his/her recommendation to the Dean (via the Department of Epidemiology Human Resources Office). Otherwise, materials for promotion are forwarded to the Dean's Office for review. Candidates for promotion should refer to the APT Manual for the most current guidance on appointment and promotions materials and formatting. After review and approval by the appropriate university offices and committees, the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost will send the faculty member a formal appointment letter.

#### **E. Preparation of materials for promotion of fixed term faculty**

The promotion of a fixed term faculty member requires demonstrated evidence of both excellence and productivity in one of the following four areas: service activity, teaching, research or clinical. If the promotion is based on service, candidates must document that their activities exceed what most faculty members do in their routine professional capacity.

See Appendix 1 (b) in the APT Manual for the main contents of an appointment package for a fixed-term position. Acceptable documentation for evidence of excellence and productivity that can be used to support a recommendation for promotion to Research Associate Professor or to Research Professor in the fixed term track is presented in Appendix 7 in the APT Manual.

If the promotion is based on teaching both the quality and quantity of the teaching contributions should be described in the promotion packet. Only those faculty members in the fixed term track whose promotion is based on excellence in teaching are required to prepare a Teaching Portfolio in which they must fully document not only their contribution to teaching, but also its excellence. The Teaching Portfolio for these faculty members must be included in the documentation submitted to the School's APT Committee.

#### **F. Timing of promotion reviews for fixed term faculty**

The timeline for promotion review within the fixed term research track is similar to that described for tenure track faculty (see Section V.B. of the SPH APT Manual). However, different is that 1-year advance notice of reappointment or promotion is not required for fixed-term faculty members. Research Assistant Professors typically are considered for promotion to Research Associate Professor at the beginning of the 7th year as Research Assistant Professor.

However, different from the tenure track, Research Assistant Professors are not obligated to be reviewed for promotion, but can remain at the Research Assistant Professor rank indefinitely. Research Associate Professors generally are considered for promotion to Research Professor at the beginning of the 5th year as Research Associate Professor. As with the tenure track, truly outstanding individuals may be considered for early promotion. In addition, prior time in rank at outside institutions may be considered in the timeline for appointment and promotion recommendations. As in the tenure track, fixed term Research Professors are reviewed every 5 years. However, the Research Professors reviews take place only at the departmental level.

#### **G. Funds for salary support**

Appointments and reappointments are made to the fixed-term research track only when funds to support salary have been identified for the length of the term. Occasionally it may happen that salary support is not available as planned. When only partial funding is available, the faculty member may continue to work at the level of effort for which funding is available, only after permission to do so has been obtained from the Department Chair. Shortfalls in support of fixed-term research track faculty will not result in supplementation of salary with Department funds.

#### **H. Department culture**

It is the culture in the Department of Epidemiology to appreciate the contributions of all faculty, students and staff to the mission of the Department. It is fully recognized that the combined work of individuals with different roles and talents is needed to obtain the excellence we seek. Specifications of different levels of prestige are not meaningful and are discouraged.

## APPENDIX A Fixed Term Ranks in the School of Public Health

### 1. *Lecturer*

Appointment to the lecturer rank may be made for a fixed term of one to five years. The following guidelines and policies apply to lecturer appointments:

- a. the individual primarily will be engaged in teaching activities;
- b. appointments may be renewed (i.e. reappointed) for fixed terms of one to five years;
- c. the individual may not acquire tenure by virtue of initial appointment or reappointment to the lecturer rank;
- d. the Individual may not be promoted within this rank, but may receive salary increases;
- e. the amount of time that an individual contributes to university-related activities may vary from 5% to 100% effort.

### 2. *Clinical Appointments*

This category includes: clinical professor, clinical associate professor, clinical assistant professor, and clinical instructor. The following guidelines and policies apply to clinical appointments:

- a. In the clinical track, the individual will be engaged in one or more of the following types of activities:
  - (1) teaching;
  - (2) providing a practice or service activity;
  - (3) supervising students in clinical or field settings.
- b. The individual may be given an initial appointment of one to five years and may be renewed (i.e. reappointed), for fixed terms of one to five years.
- c. The individual does not have, and may not acquire, tenure by virtue of initial appointment or reappointment to a clinical rank.
- d. The individual may be promoted within the clinical ranks based on the appropriate criteria specified in this manual (see Section VI. A., below)
- e. The amount of time that an individual contributes to university-related activities may vary from 5% to 100% effort.
- f. Appointment or promotion to the rank of clinical associate professor or clinical professor must be reviewed and approved by the School's Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure Committee.

### 3. *Research Appointments*

This category includes: research professor, research associate professor, research assistant professor, and research instructor. The following guidelines and policies apply to research appointments:

- a. The individual will be engaged primarily in research activities. However, he or she may be assigned as the primary instructor of a course, may co-teach a course, or may be invited to give guest lectures in courses.
- b. The individual may be given an initial appointment of one to five years, and maybe reappointed for a fixed term of one to five years.
- c. The individual does not have, and may not acquire, tenure by virtue of initial appointment or reappointment to the research ranks.
- d. The individual may be promoted within the research ranks based on the appropriate criteria specified in this manual (see Section VI. B., below). The steps that a promotion within the research ranks must go through are specified in Section VI of the APT manual.
- e. The amount of time that an individual contributes to university-related activities

may vary from 5% to 100% effort.

f. Appointment or promotion to the rank of research associate professor or research professor must be reviewed and approved by the School's Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure Committee.

#### *4. Professor of the Practice Appointments*

This fixed-term category requires prior approval from the Dean. This category is intended to match more accurately than any of the existing fixed-term designations the nature and scope of the mission for senior individuals who are field-specific experts from outside of academia that occasionally are attracted to the campus. Such individuals typically are successful professionals in the given field, whose contribution to teaching, research or service upon joining the university community has its foundation in their prior nonacademic achievements. Hence, the existing fixed-term prefix modifiers (i.e., clinical and research) are either inaccurate as to their qualifications or may fail to capture their duties or the seniority of the position.

The professor of the practice designation generally will have an associated field identifier in the title, such as Professor of the Practice of Public Health or a specific discipline such as Professor of the Practice of Biostatistics. In some cases, the field designator may be crafted to recognize interdisciplinary interests such as a Professor of the Practice of Health Communications. It is intended that the professor of the practice designator be used primarily to facilitate the recruitment of senior individuals to the School for specified periods of time. The individual may be given an initial appointment of one to five years and may be reappointed for fixed terms of one to five years. The professor of the practice category is intended for full-time, salaried appointments, or at the very least, half-time salaried appointments.

The professor of the practice title is not intended to replace existing fixed-term designators. Professor of the practice may not be used for individuals on the tenure track whose basis for promotion or tenure is practice. Appointments as assistant professor of the practice or associate professor of the practice are not authorized.