

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Academic Program Group  
Research Unit Directors  
Research Associate Deans

FROM: Arthur Lupia, Vice President for Research and Innovation (interim)

DATE: July 24, 2024

SUBJECT: Promotion Casebooks for Research Scientist Faculty, 2024-2025 Promotion Cycle

This memorandum summarizes the procedures that need to be followed for promotion recommendations for individuals appointed to the Research Scientist (RS) track. The RS track includes individuals holding the following ranks:

- Research Investigator<sup>1</sup>
- Assistant Research Scientist
- Associate Research Scientist
- Research Scientist

The University of Michigan Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) is responsible for oversight and administration of promotions for the RS track faculty. All promotions to the ranks of Associate Research Scientist and Research Scientist must be reviewed and approved by the Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI). As a reminder, Schools and Colleges on the Ann Arbor, Dearborn, and Flint campuses, along with the Life Sciences Institute and the Institute for Social Research, have the authority delegated to them by the VPRI to make promotions to the Assistant Research Scientist rank. Units that report to OVPR must submit their promotion recommendations for Associate Research Scientist and Research Scientist ranks to the VPRI.

I am asking for your cooperation to ensure that the promotion review process for our Research Scientists is thorough, equitable, and timely. Specific dossier requirements accompany this memo and are referenced in the promotion checklist. Please note that we are unable to accept incomplete dossiers, so please be very thorough as you assemble the dossier.

As a general guideline, please keep in mind that putting the proper effort into preparing the promotions casebook is crucial to this process. This includes establishing a promotions Review Committee to review each candidate. The Committee membership should include peers at an equal or higher rank than the proposed rank for the candidate and should have at least one member from outside the department or unit. Please take care in selecting arm's length non-U-M reviewers of the candidate's work to get the most objective view. We do not consider former teachers, advisors, mentors, or current or former colleagues to be "arm's length." Co-authors or major research collaborators are also not "arm's length" unless the most recent shared work occurred over 10 years prior to the promotion. Co-authorships on major academy reports of less than 10 years may be granted exceptions, but please check with the OVPR for clarifications.

<sup>1</sup> Entry level position appointed directly by the individual school, colleges, Dearborn, LSI and ISR. There is no promotional path to this rank.

Please forward this memorandum and the attached casebook checklist to Department Chairs, Program Heads, or others in your unit who are directly responsible for the promotional review of Research Scientists. These materials are also available electronically at: <https://research.umich.edu/research-resources/research-faculty-affairs/>

### **Important Updates and Highlights for the 2025 Promotion Cycle (updates listed in red)**

This memorandum also serves to highlight changes to either the criteria or the process:

1. Revised promotion criteria to Research Scientist (full). These criteria have been revised to replace the requirement for an externally-funded research award to include management of internal resources at scale. Amended language in red below:

#### **OVPR Criteria**

- a. A Record of independent scholarship/scientific contributions, and/or
- b. **Significant scientific managerial responsibilities such as supervision and mentorship of other research faculty**

#### **Implementation of Criteria (Intellectual)**

- c. Strong evidence
- d. **Evidence of substantial supervisory role over defined area, e.g., Core Director**

#### **Implementation of Criteria (Funding)**

- e. Evidence of success with external funding as PI or Co-PI/MPI **or substantive Co-I role with fiscal responsibility** (may be modest size award, including modest size foundation, industry and other small external funds **or Site PI / Co-I w scientific and fiscal responsibility for a core or clearly-delineated scientific aim**)
2. Updated Solicitation Letter for External Reviewers. The language in this document has been revised to reflect more inclusive language, as well as to refer directly to the U-M research scientist promotion criteria (instead of asking if the faculty member would be promoted at the reviewer's institution. Since most peer institutions do not have a Research Scientist faculty track, this question has caused confusion in the past and has been updated for improved clarity).
  3. Service Requirements. Please note that while there is no service requirement for appointment to Assistant Research Scientist, **there is** a service requirement for promotion to both Associate Research Scientist (Some Internal Service required) and Research Scientist (Significant Internal Service and Some External Service required).

### **Extension Requests Due to COVID-19**

Due to COVID-19, units may elect to postpone the promotion cycle for one year. This should be done in consultation with the candidate and should not be viewed as automatic. Rather, units should look at the circumstances and determine whether productivity was sufficiently impacted to grant an extension. Such extensions need not be approved by OVPR, but notification must be provided.

### **Recommendations for RS Track Promotions to Associate Research Scientist and Research Scientist**

OVPR considers RS promotions just once a year (as is true for all faculty appointments). This ensures that a common frame of reference is used in making these decisions and enables OVPR to review the total research faculty promotional pattern within the University. Accordingly, recommendations for all RS track promotions, the effective date of which would be September 1, 2025, are due:

**Deadline: Wednesday, February 12, 2025**

Please note that the schedule for the RS promotion review process is the same as that of all faculty promotions and that casebooks are to be submitted electronically following OVPR instructions.

### **Promotions of Research Faculty holding Multiple Appointments**

If a research faculty member holds appointments in more than one unit (whether as research, clinical, or instructional faculty), the units involved are strongly urged to conduct the promotion review process collaboratively and simultaneously. Use the same letters of recommendation for both instructional, clinical, and research faculty promotion processes, and be certain to include a statement in your letter of solicitation indicating that the letter of recommendation will be shared with the Promotions Committee, Dean/Director, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and VPRI. Please note that **separate casebooks are not necessary**, but if the research and instructional faculty appointments do not report to the same Dean/Director, then both Dean(s)/Director(s) should sign the appropriate forms and submit their respective letters addressed to both the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the VPRI.

### **Affirmative Action Responsibilities**

In reviewing Research Scientists for promotion, units are reminded of their affirmative action responsibilities and are encouraged to carefully consider promotions to ensure that they are not affected negatively by considerations of gender, race, age, or other irrelevant characteristics.

### **Notification**

The OVPR will complete the review of all RS promotion dossiers and will notify Deans and Departments of the decisions no later than **May 15, 2025**. It is the Dean's/Director's responsibility to contact individual faculty regarding a negative decision for promotion.

Please contact the OVPR at (734) 763-1290 or [ovpr.faculty.affairs@umich.edu](mailto:ovpr.faculty.affairs@umich.edu) with any questions about the promotion process.

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Attachments