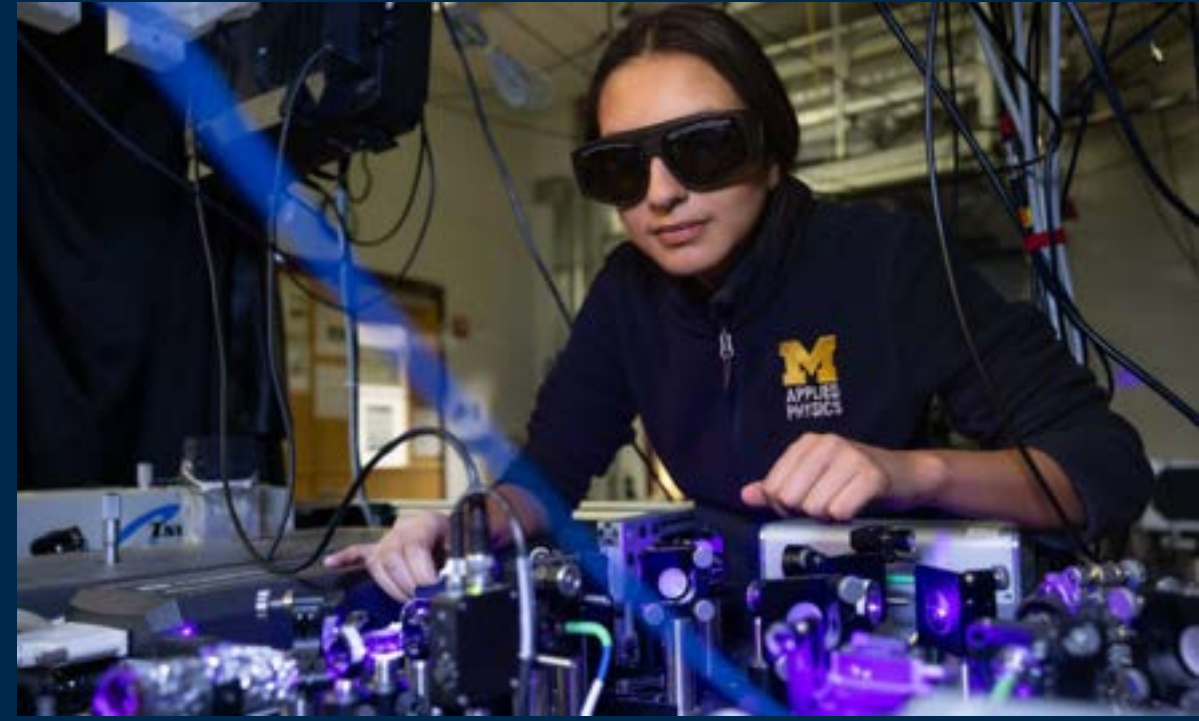


Research Faculty Town Hall: Updates to the Research Scientist Appointment & Promotion Criteria

June 15, 2026

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Today's Agenda

- Some Data on Research Track Faculty
- Updates to the Appointment & Promotion Criteria for Research Scientists
- Promotion Process for Research Track Faculty
- Q&A
- Networking

Research Faculty by Rank & Track (Nov 2025)

Title/Track	Investigator	Assistant	Associate	Full	Total
Research Investigator	166	-	-	-	166
Research Scientist	-	165	153	35	353
Research Professor	-	114	46	61	221
Total	166	279	199	96	740

Research Faculty by Unit (Nov 2025)

Unit	Research Investigators	Research Scientists	Research Professors	Total
Medical School	100	130	132	362
College of Engineering	9	107	15	131
Institute for Social Research	9	19	42	70
Life Sciences Institute	14	18	2	34
School of Public Health	6	11	15	32
College of Lit, Science & Arts	1	25	3	29
College of Pharmacy	2	8	2	12
School for Environ and Sustain	0	11	0	11
School of Dentistry	5	3	0	8
Marsal Family School of Educ	3	4	1	8
School of Nursing	0	3	4	7
School of Social Work	1	3	0	4

Research Scientist (RS) Faculty by Unit (Nov 2025)

Unit	Assistant RS	Associate RS	Full RS	Total
Medical School	48	72	10	130
College of Engineering	58	38	11	107
College of Lit, Science & Arts	11	9	5	25
Institute for Social Research	12	5	2	19
Life Sciences Institute	9	9	0	18
School of Public Health	5	3	3	11
School for Environ and Sustain	7	4	0	11
College of Pharmacy	5	2	1	8
Marsal Family School of Educ	1	3	0	4
School of Nursing	2	1	0	3
School of Social Work	2	1	0	3
School of Dentistry	1	2	0	3

Committee to Review Research Scientist Appointment & Promotion Criteria

Statement of Purpose: Criteria for research scientist track were established in 2008, with updates in 2019 and 2024. After 16 years, a full review was needed to assess relevance to:

- Faculty contributions to the university mission
- Evolving roles in team science

Goal: Ensure a fair, consistent process and explore operational improvements for the track.

Scope: Ann Arbor, Flint, and Dearborn Campuses

Committee Process

- Convened 5 committee meetings from March to October 2025
- Broad representation across units and campuses
- Reviewed internal data on research scientists
- Compared appointment/promotion criteria to staff scientist titles and research professor pathway
- Reviewed benchmarking data on research scientist and research professor tracks across 11 peer institutions

Recommendations

- Revise criteria to reflect ***additional scholarly contributions*** (differentiate from staff titles)
- Revise criteria to ***remove required PI status for full Research Scientist*** (differentiate from RP pathway)
- Replace requirement for 2 arm's length external letters with requirement for ***minimum 2 non-arm's length external letters; 5 internal/external letters required*** (better reflects team science role)
- ***No change - time in rank requirements***, but provide more transparent information on extensions
- Establish a ***workgroup to address climate issues for research track faculty*** - in partnership with the Provost's office

Revised Scholarship

Performance Area		Associate Research Scientist (ARS)	Research Scientist (RS)	
Scholarship	OVPR Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong local and growing national scholarly reputation on the basis of research productivity and contributions over several years, possibly as part of a larger research program Record of peer-reviewed publications Scholarly contributions that serve to advance the field and/or strengthen the scientific community Participation in relevant academic or professional meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong regional, national and/or international scholarly reputation on the basis of sustained research productivity and contributions Substantial record of peer-reviewed publications Significant, sustained participation in scholarly activities that serve to advance the field and/or strengthen the scientific community relevant academic or professional meetings 	
	Implementation of Criteria	Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productive over several years, possibly as part of a large program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained productivity and contributions
		Peer-reviewed Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing record of peer-reviewed publications: although majority of contribution may be part of large author teams, demonstration of leading the output, writing of some scholarly work expected as typically measured as lead author on some publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial record, although majority of contribution may be part of a larger author team
		Academic / Professional Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in relevant academic or professional meetings; leadership/service to academic or professional societies, or Activities contributing to advancing the field (e.g., peer review, editorial positions, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant and sustained participation in relevant academic or professional meetings; leadership/service to academic or professional societies, or Activities contributing to advancing the field (e.g., peer review, editorial positions, etc.)
		Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong local and growing regional or national 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong regional, national and/or international
Impact (scientific, policy or public)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant 		

Revised Independence

Performance Area			Associate Research Scientist (ARS)	Research Scientist (RS)
Independence	OVPR Criteria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence not required or planned for, but would strengthen the case Plan for supporting role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence not required or planned for, but would strengthen the case Significant and sustained participation on research projects in a team science role A Record of independent scholarship/scientific contributions, and/or Significant scientific managerial responsibilities such as supervision and mentorship of other research faculty
	Implementation of criteria	Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong evidence of scholarly contributions (see attached memo) Evidence of substantial supervisory role over defined area, e.g., Core Director
		Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of proposal efforts as Co-I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of proposal and awards as Co-I 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) not required, but would strengthen the case

Scholarly contributions

Recognition of a broader set of scholarly contributions in addition to conventional research products (e.g., journal publications or conference presentations which are already listed in the promotion criteria) which contribute to the academic community and/or serve to advance the field

Scholarly contributions - Potential activities (not exhaustive!)

- Conference peer review
- Organizing a panel/workshop - local, regional, national
- Organizing and leading trainings
- Leading the creation, documentation and disseminations of data products
- Invited panel presenter
- Leadership role in a professional society
- Mentorship of trainees (esp outside the immediate lab setting)
- Journal peer review
- Editorial position
- National committee
- Community engagement (e.g., research translation)
- Policy contributions on the local, state or national level
- Study section/ grant peer review
- Guideline committees, advisory boards
- Leading data training and dissemination
- Supervisory role over defined area (e.g. core director)

Scholarly contributions

Service activities that do not represent scholarly contributions

- Serving on a promotion committee
- Serving on a space committee

Submitted Questions

1. To what extent are community-facing disseminations of our work (i.e., presentations, workshops, evaluation reports, community reports, etc), considered in the promotion process? Do these count towards our promotion?
2. How will the revised criteria account for research faculty in cooperative institutes whose work is largely NOAA-funded and operationally focused? In particular, how will promotion reviews recognize contributions such as agency-driven projects, operational tools, model development, stakeholder support, and team-based deliverables that may not fit traditional academic metrics?
1. How do appointment criteria work in practice-e.g., position designated scientist track based on HR decision, funding, etc. as opposed to candidate qualifications/potential; the need for clearly defined & documented processes for transfer from scientist to professor track (without promotion/moving from assistant to associate) including criteria, timing, etc.

Submitted Questions

4. Would transitioning from a Research Track to a Tenure Track position be considered a new appointment? How common are successful transitions like this, and are there specific criteria or considerations that apply? If this transition is generally considered difficult, what are the main reasons?
5. To what extent do schools, departments, or institutes have flexibility in interpreting and applying promotion criteria? For example, are they permitted to establish additional criteria beyond the university-wide guidelines?

Questions/Discussion

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