

The University of Alabama
Academic Personnel Category:
Research Positions

A comprehensive research university requires a cadre of personnel who are able to devote full time to research. Since much research is supported from contracts and grants awarded for specific time periods, full-time positions in research may require personnel policies which differ from traditional faculty, administrative/professional, and clerical positions. Research contracts or grants may be awarded on short notice, precluding lengthy searches; contracts may be for periods of time ranging from one to five years; and the career goals of research personnel may differ from traditional faculty members, requiring less long-term commitment from the University. These considerations provide the basis at the University of Alabama for a non-tenure earning category of personnel, called Research Positions. This category of personnel is in addition to existing categories: faculty, administrative/Professional, and Classified (non-exempt).

Four levels of appointment exist within the Research Positions category. Position titles are specific to both the level of appointment and the major discipline involved (Example: Engineering, Chemistry, Economics, etc.). In descending order, the levels of appointment are: Senior Research, Research, Associate Research, and Assistant Research (Engineer, Chemist, Economist, etc.). **These levels parallel the faculty ranks of Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, and Instructor respectively; thus, qualifications and salaries of individuals appointed to levels within the Research Positions category must correspond to the equivalent faculty rank in the particular discipline.** While the major focus of individuals appointed in this personnel category is research, occasionally individuals may elect to teach, but these teaching assignments may not exceed one course in any semester.

Appointments in the Research Positions category are non-tenure earning, and may vary in duration, depending on the conditions of the research contract, grant, or project. Appointments which are expected to be for one year or more are termed “renewable, with renewal subject to the conditions of the research contract, grant, or project, or to the need for the individual in other research activities within the University. Appointments which are expected to be for less than one year are termed “temporary”. Both renewable and temporary appointments may be full-time or part-time, depending on the personnel needs of the research activity. Benefits associated with Research Positions may differ, depending upon whether the appointment is renewable or temporary and full-time or part-time.