

UAB DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY POLICY ON NON-TENURE EARNING (NTE) RESEARCH FACULTY (ALL RANKS)

Effective July 9, 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

Non-tenure earning (NTE) research faculty are integral to the Department's research mission. Research faculty are expected to develop, sustain, and lead independent research programs supported by extramural funding, with expectations increasing in scope, impact, and leadership across ranks.

This policy governs the appointment, responsibilities, evaluation, expectations, promotion, and non-renewal of NTE research faculty at all ranks. It is aligned with the current UAB Faculty Handbook, the Heersink School of Medicine (HSOM) Faculty Handbook, and other applicable university guidelines.

2. Appointments and Organization Structure

2.1 Rank Definitions

- **Instructor (Research) and Assistant Professor (Research):** Faculty developing research independence.
- **Associate Professor (Research) and Professor (Research):** Faculty with sustained independence, extramural funding, and national or international recognition, as demonstrated by professional visibility.

2.2 Organizational Structure

- All NTE research faculty are appointed within a division.
- Division Directors oversee faculty integration, evaluation, and resource alignment, in coordination with the Department Chair.

2.3 Mentorship

- Instructors and Assistant Professors must have a designated senior faculty mentor.
- Mentors are responsible for:
 - Providing scientific and career development guidance
 - Supporting grant development and publication strategy
 - Ensuring access to necessary research resources
 - Contributing to salary support, as specified in the offer letter
 - Establishing and annually updating a written development plan
- Mentorship is expected to decrease as faculty demonstrate sustained research independence, as assessed during annual review.
- Associate Professors and Professors are expected to function independently and serve as mentors to trainees and early-stage faculty.

2.4 Appointment Terms and Renewal

- Initial appointments are typically one-year terms, renewable annually.
- Renewal is contingent upon satisfactory performance, progress towards rank-specific expectations, and availability of funding.
- The Department Chair determines terms in consultation with the Division Director.

2.5 Authority

- The Department Chair is responsible for recommending appointments, renewals, promotions, and non-renewals.

- Final approval for appointments and promotions resides with the Dean and Provost, consistent with HSOM and University policy.

3. Evaluation and Oversight

- Faculty undergo annual review by the Division Director.
- Reviews assess research productivity, scholarly impact, extramural funding, progress to independence (Instructor and Assistant Professor), and mentorship and service contributions appropriate to rank.
- Mentor input is required for Instructors and Assistant Professors.
- Failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress may result in non-renewal in accordance with departmental expectations, school, and/or university policies.

4. Expectations and Performance by Rank

4.1 Core Responsibilities (All Ranks)

NTE research faculty are expected to:

- Conduct and publish original research
- Maintain an independent or developing research program
- Secure extramural funding
- Contribute to mentorship and training
- Contribute to collaborative and/or team science

4.2 Funding Expectations

Extramural funding is a core requirement for all ranks.

- Instructors and Assistant Professors are expected to actively pursue funding as a Principal Investigator (PI) and must secure significant extramural funding (e.g., NIH R21, R01, or equivalent from foundations or industry) within the first 3 years of appointment.
- Associate Professors and Professors are expected to actively pursue and sustain extramural funding as PI or MPI (e.g., NIH R01-level of equivalent).

4.3. Rank-Specific Criteria

Instructor (Research)

- Develop a trajectory toward research independence
- Submit extramural research proposals as PI within 6-12 months of initial appointment
- Publish papers as first and/or senior author
- Transition to Assistant Professor typically within a 3-5-year development period, unless extended with approval

Assistant Professor (Research)

- Demonstrate research independence
- Establish a distinct research program
- Obtain extramural funding as PI
- Publish consistently as a senior/corresponding author
- Time in rank typically does not exceed seven years without promotion or approved extension

Associate Professor (Research)

- Maintain sustained extramural funding (PI and/or MPI)
- Demonstrate consistent, high quality publication record

- Achieve national recognition (e.g., invited talks, peer review service on grant review panels, and/or leadership roles in professional organizations)
- Mentor trainees and junior faculty
- Participate in professional and institutional service

Professor (Research)

- Sustain a high-impact, continuously funded research program
- Maintain a consistent, high quality publication record
- Demonstrate national and/or international leadership
- Provide sustained mentorship
- Contribute to institutional, national, or international service

4.4 Transition to the Tenure-Earning (TE) Track

- Faculty appointed to the NTE Research Track may be considered for appointment to a Tenure-Earning (TE) faculty position in accordance with applicable UAB, HSOM, and departmental policies. Appointment to the TE track is not automatic and is not achieved through promotion within the NTE track.
- Appointment to a TE position requires selection through an approved national search conducted for a tenure-earning faculty position and evaluation according to the criteria applicable to the TE track.
- Service in the NTE track does not guarantee appointment to a TE position.

4.5 Team Science

Participation in collaborative and/or interdisciplinary team-based research is:

- Encouraged at all ranks
- Expected for Associate Professors and Professors
- Recognized as a significant scholarly contribution

4.6 Effort and Salary Support

- Salary support must be derived from a combination of extramural grant funding, internal grant funding, and/or mentor support (for Instructors and Assistant Professor, as applicable)

5. Recruitment and Appointment Procedures

5.1 Search requirements

- For all full-time or part-time regular NTE positions, recruitment at the national level is required unless otherwise justified and approved by the Dean and Provost. All appointments must be made in accordance with UAB hiring practices and government regulations, and following acceptance by the candidate of the initial offer of appointment must be approved by the President. See UAB Faculty Handbook for additional information.

5.2 Application Materials

Instructor or Assistant Professor

- Candidate CV
- Mentor CV
- Written career development plan
- Division assessment of readiness and independence

Associate Professor or Professor

- CV
- Research Statement (accomplishments and future directions)
- Funding history
- Evidence of national and/or international recognition
- Documentation of mentorship and service
- External letters of evaluation

5.3 Appointment Approval

- Appointments to the ranks of NTE Instructor and Assistant Professor are approved following completion of required departmental, School-level and Provost reviews, with recommendation by the Department Chair.
- Appointments at the ranks of NTE Associate Professor and Professor require review and approval by the departmental APT committee and Chair, followed by approvals of HSOM Faculty Council, Dean, and Provost.
- Appointment approval may take several months.
- Candidates may not represent themselves as faculty or claim faculty status in research proposals or other official submissions until formal written notification of appointment is issued by the Department.
- At the Chair's discretion, letters indicating that an appointment or promotion process has been initiated may be provided to funding agencies; however, such communications do not confer faculty status or guarantee final approval.

6. Promotion

Promotion in the NTE research track is based on sustained excellence in research, with increasing expectations for independence, impact, and leadership.

6.1 Promotion Criteria

- Instructor → Assistant Professor (Research)
 - Demonstrated readiness for independent research
 - Submission of extramural funding proposals
 - Evidence of scholarly productivity
 - Approval required at the Departmental, School, and Provost levels (Faculty Council approval not required)
- Assistant Professor → Associate Professor (Research)
 - Demonstrated research independence and sustained extramural funding as PI
 - Independent publication record
 - Evidence of national recognition
 - Typically, ≥ 5 years in rank, consistent with HSOM guidelines.
 - Approval required by the Departmental APT Committee and HSOM Faculty Council, followed by approval of the Dean and Provost.
- Associate Professor → Professor (Research)
 - Sustained record of high-impact research
 - Continued extramural funding

- National and/or international leadership and recognition
- Significant mentorship and service contributions.
- Typically, ≥ 5 years in rank, consistent with HSOM guidelines.
- Approval required by the Departmental APT Committee and HSOM Faculty Council, followed by approval of the Dean and Provost.

6.2 Promotion Process

- Initiated by the Division Director in consultation with the Chair.
- Promotion applications must document scholarly productivity, funding, recognition, and contributions appropriate to rank.
- Evaluation criteria align with HSOM Faculty Handbook standards for promotion.
- Reviewed by Departmental APT committee and HSOM Faculty Council.

7. Non-renewal

Non-renewal may occur if faculty fail to meet expectations in:

- Research productivity
- Extramural funding
- Progress towards independence (Instructor and Assistant Professor)
- Non-renewal will follow university policies. See UAB Faculty Handbook for more information.

8. Resources and Space

- Research space is allocated based on programmatic needs, funding level, and departmental priorities.
- Space assignments are determined by mentors and Division Directors for Instructors and Assistant Professors and by Division Director for senior ranks, in coordination with the Department Chair.

9. Policy Review and Authority

This policy:

- Supplements the UAB and HSOM Faculty Handbooks.
- Does not supersede institutional policies.
- Will be reviewed every 3-5 years or as required to ensure alignment with school and university standards and policies.