

Guidelines for Faculty Appointments & Promotions in the School of Medicine

I. Introduction

Criteria for appointment and promotion at the Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) have been developed to accommodate diverse goals while rewarding a wide range of achievements and contributions within the academic medical center. These guidelines provide clear expectations for academic advancement and should facilitate mentoring of junior faculty.

For the majority of its faculty, the School of Medicine recommends unmodified titles. As written in the Faculty Handbook, criteria for promotion at each level require scholarship, productivity, achievement and excellence recognized within and outside the institution. Interdisciplinary research is encouraged as a valid career focus.

At each level, achievements will be evaluated by assessments by peers both within and outside the institution, students, trainees, and patients when appropriate. Clinical excellence and administrative leadership also contribute. Regional, national and international recognition is documented by letters from peers, service on editorial boards and federal study sections, invited lectureships, election to societies, receipt of awards, and leadership in national or international committees and advisory groups.

All faculty must maintain high ethical standards and professional values appropriate for role models of medical and graduate students in the health sciences.

II. Titles and Basic Requirements

- **Instructor** is the entry level rank for those who have recently completed their post doctoral training, residency or fellowship training. This rank is appropriate for new faculty, generally with MD, PhD or equivalent degrees, who have the potential for academic advancement. Individuals at the instructor level may be in positions of advanced training prior to leaving the institution or moving to the assistant professor rank. Instructors should focus on their career direction, develop independence in a specific area, and concentrate on scholarly productivity.
- **Assistant Professor** rank generally requires completion of all formal training with evidence of prior scholarly activity, clear definition of career goals, and expectation of future academic career advancement. During this important career-defining phase, faculty should pay particular attention to developing areas of scholarly excellence and individual identity.
- **Associate Professor** rank generally requires at least 3-6 years as an assistant professor, scholarly achievements, and recognition of these achievements at regional and national levels. Creation of new programs and development of an area or areas of individual identity are also important as is mentoring and training others.
- **Professor** rank generally requires at least 5 years as an associate professor and a distinguished record of scholarship and professional accomplishment recognized at regional, national, and international levels and continued mentoring and training of others. Recognition as an authority in one's specific area(s) of interest is essential.

III. Diversity in Promotion Criteria

Promotion recognizes diversity in contributions to the University's missions. Only through the support of diversity can we maintain academic and clinical excellence in our departments. Developing and communicating new knowledge is highly valued as is a reputation for achievement and for excellence both within and outside the institution. Scholarly contributions may be made in research, education or a combination of the two:

- **Educational Focus:** Professionals who devote significant time to education should have a focus and identity in educational scholarship. Scholarship in education includes developing new or substantially revised courses or curricula, innovative teaching materials or strategies, and educational research projects resulting in findings that are disseminated at professional conferences and in peer-reviewed publications. Scholarship in relation to clinical practice applications includes written reports of organizational innovations, patient education materials and clinical reviews, and/or dissemination of clinical information through publication and oral presentations.
- **Research Focus:** Faculty who devote significant time to scientific investigation should develop a well-focused area of scientific innovation and identity, publish in peer-reviewed journals, acquire extramural funding by federal and private institutions, and build a research team. Scientific training of others at pre- and postdoctoral levels, as well as participation in intra-departmental research programs is also important.

To facilitate communication, departments who prefer tracks will use the following consistent designations:

- **Scientist or Clinician Educator:** This track includes professionals involved in educational activities, and scholarly activities that result in communication of knowledge. Scholarship in relation to teaching includes the development of new courses or curricula, course syllabi, lectures, videos, and other teaching materials. Scholarship in relation to clinical practice applications includes written reports of organizational innovations, patient education materials and clinical reviews, and/or integration of clinical information through book chapters, editorials, oral presentations, and clinical reports.
- **Clinician Scientist:** This track comprises faculty who are involved in clinical and educational activities as well as in focused basic science, health services, or clinical research. Individuals who choose this track are expected to have the same general goals as listed for those in the scientist track, although scholarly activities similar to those listed for clinical scholars can also be taken into account for promotion.
- **Scientist:** This track includes faculty who devote significant time to scientific investigation. Emphasis is on developing a well-focused area of scientific innovation and identity, publication in peer-reviewed journals, acquisition of extramural funding by federal and private institutions, and the building of a research team. Responsibility for scientific training of others at pre- and postdoctoral levels, as well as participation in intra-departmental research programs, is of critical importance, as well.

IV. Titles Modified by Prefix

Clinical: Faculty predominantly responsible for clinical activities with few administrative, or scholarly activities or responsibilities will have titles with the Clinical prefix. Criteria for promotion include local reputation, measures of patient volume and patient satisfaction, time in rank, teaching activities, and other contributions to the medical center or its affiliates. Emphasis on continued clinical excellence, teaching, and departmental “citizenship” will be of primary importance in the timing of promotions.

Research: Faculty whose titles include a Research prefix include scientists whose responsibilities include assigned projects under the aegis of a senior scientist. These faculty members depend on others for funding and for research direction. Promotion is judged by productivity in publications, participation in grants, and documentation of the importance of the faculty member as a technical and intellectual resource for the section, the department, and the medical school.

Adjunct: These scientists or physician-scientists are affiliated with the department, but associated on a part-time basis with no primary obligations to or from the institution. Criteria for promotion are the same as for full-time faculty.