

Basic Science Wet-Lab Department Tenure-Line Salary Guidelines for Chairs

October 4, 2021

These guidelines are intended to help Chairs establish and implement appropriate department policy for compensation of tenure-line faculty. They are intended to allow flexibility to optimally serve the needs of the different departments, and should not be interpreted as requirements. They also anticipate flexibility and the application of judgement to specific faculty members.

These guidelines and any subsequent changes to department compensation policy do not overrule formal agreements such as offer letters, unless the letter refers to the salary following “current” or “current or future” department policy – which is the recommended practice. If department salary policy and an offer letter are out of alignment, the current salary policy should be applied from the time of a promotion or from the time when the faculty member transitions out of a tailored startup phase and begins normal faculty support status.

In cases where an individual faculty member’s compensation is out of alignment with these guidelines and department policy, the appropriate adjustment could be implemented over multiple years.

Tenure-line faculty are expected to achieve excellence in research/investigation, and the primary criterion for advancement of tenure-line faculty is excellence in research/investigation. This is indicated on the Faculty Affairs web site, under Tenure Line Faculty Criteria (<https://medicine.utah.edu/academic-affairs/tenure-line-faculty/>). Therefore, the primary criterion for compensation of tenure-line faculty is excellence in investigation, which in the basic science departments includes the expectation of strong extramural funding. It is also recognized that some tenure-line faculty members make exceptional contributions in other areas.

Specific Guidelines:

- (i) Compensation should comprise base and merit-enhancement/incentive components. The base salary continues from year to year and is intended to provide a level of security to faculty in good standing. The merit-enhancement/incentive salary is only committed for one year at a time and is intended to provide competitive compensation to high-performing faculty. To be consistent with NIH policy, this is determined by the Chair during the annual budget process. It can be given for excellence in various

areas, especially investigation/research, but also as appropriate to some extent for exceptional education or service. These merit enhancements may be funded from a variety of sources, especially from grants in the case of excellence in investigation/research (in a manner consistent with reported effort on grants), but when appropriate also from department sources.

- (ii) In order to minimize potential for confusion, the salary distribution for base and merit-enhancement/incentive should be tracked by the department and stated explicitly for each faculty member in their salary letter each year.
- (iii) The tenure guarantee should be defined for each department and filed with the Associate Dean of Finance and Administration, School of Medicine (Cynthia Best). It should typically be defined as a fraction of the base salary rather than the total salary.
- (iv) Depending on overall performance, a faculty member's base salary may drop below the department target level such as by receiving relatively low annual raises.
- (v) If a faculty member is unable to meet the expectation of salary on grants and is not making other contributions (education/administration) substantially beyond those expected for a faculty member with a funded research program, the salary should ratchet down to the tenure guarantee level over not more than 3 years.
- (vi) The salary on grants expectation should not be met by institutional funds such as to the department for teaching or administrative duties. With few exceptions, those funds are provided to the department rather than to an individual faculty member. In rare instances, a department may allow institutional dollars to count as "salary on grants", in which case those funds should apply only for contributions that are beyond the expectations of a faculty member that has a funded research program, and should not generally count for more than about one-third the value of salary paid from a grant.

NOTES

Salary charged to grants must comply with sponsor requirements such as being within the scope of committed effort.

Departments may choose to set an upper limit on compensation but are not obliged to do so.

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