

2007-2008 Group on Faculty Affairs
AAMC Listserve Queries & Responses

Query: Urgent Hiring Practices

Question from Freda Zackin, University of Medicine and Dentistry New Jersey (zackinfr@umdnj.edu):

I am new to this list and to my current position, and would appreciate any responses.

Our school has a category of faculty appointment titled, "Awaiting Faculty Appointment". This is used to hire a faculty member quickly, while awaiting resolution of a number of possible issues, such as licensure in the state, faculty committee decisions, Board of Trustee approval of appointment, etc. The "awaiting appointment" is for a limited period and is designated "at-will" until the permanent appointment becomes final.

Because these "awaiting appointments" can drag on due to delays in one or more approvals, much dissatisfaction ensues. We would like to find an alternative and wonder whether other schools do anything to bring on such faculty quickly, that we can emulate.

Does your medical school have a mechanism for hiring new faculty on an urgent basis, that is, prior to completion of procedures for formal academic appointment?

Thanks in advance.

Responses:

Lois Geist, University of Iowa (lois-geist@uiowa.edu):

I am not sure that this is equivalent, but we have two options for this:

The first is a visiting position. This can be done without going through the usual channels of appointment and can generally be made quickly. The second is an associate position. This likewise can be made quickly and does not go through the usual approval channels. Both need to be renewed on a yearly basis, and can only be renewed twice. Obviously if this is a physician and s/he does not have a license they cannot practice but certainly could teach.

The difference is that generally speaking with the visiting position we do not pay benefits (health insurance or retirement) whereas with an associate we do.

This is from our appointment document:

3. Other Non-tenure Track Instructional Appointments

Appointments to these positions may be made to individuals with academic degrees as listed below. However, individuals with higher academic degrees also may be appointed to these ranks. Appointments are made on an annual basis and may be renewed. Those with M.D./D.O. or Ph.D. degrees ordinarily should not occupy these positions for extended periods, and in the case of the rank of Associate, should not exceed 3 years.

If the individual to be appointed is to be responsible for the medical care of patients, he or she must have a license to practice medicine in Iowa and must demonstrate competence as a physician. Competence as a physician will be established by the hospital staff process of reviewing clinical credentials and granting hospital privileges. Individuals other than physicians involved in the care of patients should meet the criteria established by hospital bylaws and any relevant state licensure requirements.

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a. Associate

(1) He or she must show promise of ability to contribute to teaching through the provision of service (See Appendix I).

(2) At a minimum, holds a Master's degree or the equivalent.

(3) Appointed to fill a specific service. Individuals properly qualified may have patient care responsibilities and engage in research.

For individuals with M.D./D.O. or Ph.D. degrees, individual shows potential for appointment to the tenure track on the basis of promise in teaching, research and service. However, appointment to this rank does not guarantee eventual appointment to the tenure track. Individuals in this rank with appropriate qualifications are not precluded from applying for a position in the salaried clinical faculty track.

(4) Appointments at this rank are made on an annual basis. For individuals with M.D./D.O. or Ph.D. degrees the total time in this rank should not exceed three years.

Leslie Schneier, Mount Sinai School of Medicine (leslie.schneier@mssm.edu):

We have a transitional title called Senior Faculty that is given to recruits proposed for Associate Professors and Professors while they undergo A & P review. Typically newcomers hold the Senior Faculty title for a maximum of one year, and the title is superseded by the standard academic title once approved. We don't have a similar transitional title for Assistant Professors and Instructors because their appointments are at the Chair's discretion with no institutional A & P review so they go through quickly enough that an interim designation isn't needed.

Robert Bornstein, Ohio State University (Robert.bornstein@osumc.edu):

We use a visiting faculty appointment. This allows us to appoint someone at a senior rank while they go through the P&T process (or whatever other administrative process may be holding up the normal procedure). A person can have a visiting appointment for several years so this allows us to resolve almost any bureaucratic glitch that might come up. The positions can be implemented immediately.

Linda McLaughlin, Stanford University (deasy@stanford.edu):

At Stanford, we utilize an "Acting" position for faculty at all ranks while their academic appointment is flowing through the review process. However, the Acting position confers staff benefits (not faculty benefits) and faculty candidates in this "in waiting" position cannot access the faculty housing programs, which makes them very cross. So, we move as quickly as we can to appoint them to their regular faculty position.

Andrew Ries, University of California San Diego (aries@ucsd.edu):

At UC San Diego our departments commonly use contract positions for physicians that can be hired quickly to meet "urgent" clinical needs while the academic appointment process winds its way through. These are considered staff positions with benefits but are not faculty. In general, we try to discourage overusing this pathway, particularly when it involves an outside recruit who often does not understand that they are not yet faculty. We had a recent situation in which a department, after recruiting a physician from afar, decided that they were not a good fit, withdrew the academic appointment, and terminated the contract. Also, this can make the academic appointment more difficult when the academic review committee sees this as a workaround to the academic appointment process and raises objections.