

Research Scientist Series: Merit and Promotion Standards

Department of Physics

Adopted: TBD

The Department of Physics follows University of California policy ([APM 310](#)) and UC San Diego campus procedures ([PPM 230-310](#)) regarding the appointment, reappointment, merit increase, and promotion of Research Scientists.

Research Scientists are expected to conduct independent, original, and creative research programs that advance the research mission. Unlike Project Scientists, who typically work under the supervision of a faculty member or Research Scientist, appointees in the Research Scientist series are responsible for developing self-directed research agendas, securing extramural support, and disseminating their findings through peer-reviewed publications, presentations, and other scholarly outputs. Research Scientists may serve as Principal Investigators (PIs) or Co-PIs on grants and are expected to demonstrate leadership in their fields.

Evaluation for merit and promotion is based on the quality, originality, and impact of research contributions, professional competence, and service to the University and profession. Evidence of scholarly productivity may include publications, data products, instrumentation, software, patents, or other recognized research deliverables. For collaborative projects, the individual's role and intellectual contributions should be clearly described. Professional competence is demonstrated by recognition as an independent scholar, active participation in professional societies, invitations to present at conferences, and sustained engagement in research collaborations. Service to the University and profession is expected, with the level and scope of service increasing at higher ranks.

Merit advancement requires evidence of continuous and effective engagement in high-quality, impactful research, along with professional service. Accelerated advancement may be recommended when accomplishments substantially exceed normal expectations, such as securing major extramural grants as PI, producing influential first- or senior-authored publications in high-impact journals, or leading significant research collaborations, facilities, or experimental/technical projects.

Promotion is a career review reflecting cumulative scholarly achievement, leadership, and independence. Advancement from Assistant to Associate Research Scientist requires a demonstrated record of independent research accomplishments, such as first- or senior-authored publications, successful grant activity, and emerging recognition in the field. Promotion from Associate to Full Research Scientist requires an established record of sustained and impactful contributions, demonstrated ability to secure and lead funded research programs, and recognition

at the national or international level. Advancement to Above-Scale requires evidence of research excellence and professional distinction comparable to that expected of faculty in the above-scale category, including sustained, outstanding contributions to physics and significant service to the University and the broader research community.