

# INITIAL APPOINTMENT AT RANK

## MSU-paid Faculty Appointment Systems

The MSU-paid faculty appointment systems in the College of Human Medicine include the **tenure system**, the **health programs system**, the **fixed term faculty system**, the **research faculty system** and the **academic specialist system**.

Initial appointment at a rank higher than assistant professor (or higher than specialist in the academic specialist system) is reserved for those who meet the department, college and university expectations for promotion to the rank and appointment system sought, including contributions aligned with the university's diversity, equity and inclusion goals. Initial appointment at higher rank requires peer review along with administrative approval. This document outlines the process for approving appointments at these ranks in the College of Human Medicine.

In the tenure system, no offer letters can be provided to candidates at the rank of associate professor with tenure or professor with tenure without approval from the executive vice president for health sciences, provost, and president.

## Overview of review process

Approval of initial appointment at higher rank requires review at the department and college levels. Required approvals by appointment system are summarized in the table.

Appointment System	Department peer review	Chair review	College peer review	Dean review	University review
Tenure System	Yes	Yes	Yes for associate professor with tenure and full professor with tenure	Yes	Yes; Board of Trustees makes final decision
Health Programs Fixed Term Research System Academic Specialist	Yes	Yes	Yes for full professor	Yes; dean makes final decision	No

## Preparing for review

Chairpersons (or center/institute/division directors) should communicate their desire to offer a candidate a rank higher than assistant professor (or specialist) early in the hiring process. **Early communication is critical to align review processes with hiring processes and ensure smooth onboarding of faculty.**

Chairpersons and directors should email the associate dean for faculty affairs and staff administration with their intention to make the request for higher rank. For appointments at higher rank in the tenure system, this communication should also include the senior associate dean for research. The associate dean for faculty affairs and staff administration will advise about next steps including timing of the review processes.

## Review Process

A departmental peer review committee provides advice to the department chairperson regarding the award of the rank sought.

The department chairperson conducts an independent evaluation, taking into consideration the peer review committee's evaluation. The chairperson prepares a summary letter from the department stating the case for the higher

rank, including the outcome of the department committee vote. A letter from the department committee is preferred but not required.

The department submits to the college via the Microsoft Teams-based submission process for RPT dossiers, as a single bookmarked .pdf. The submission must include:

1. Chair summary letter and optional department review committee summary letter. There must be confirmation that the department RPT committee has provided advice to the chair (typically, support for the requested rank was indicated).
2. Letters of recommendation and/or external review. The minimum number of letters required is specified in the [CHM Letters of Reference Guidelines](#) under College Requirements by Appointment System. Letters required in the job posting may be used for this purpose if they address rank and are from reviewers of sufficient rank and status.
3. Curriculum vitae
4. Any narrative statements required in the job posting (e.g., cover letter, research goals, teaching statement, DEI statement, etc.)
5. Any other evidence that can help reviewers determine if the criteria for rank sought are met, including contributions to diversity, equity and inclusion. For example, if the faculty member was promoted within the last year at another institution, the dossier submitted for that promotion review may be used for this purpose.

For appointments at the rank of professor or associate professor with tenure, the College RPT Committee provides advice to the dean regarding the award of the rank sought.

The dean independently reviews each recommendation. In those systems requiring university approval, the dean's recommendation is forwarded to the Office of Health Sciences and the Office of the Provost.

Upon final approval, an approval memo will be forwarded to the department. The offer letter and approval memo are included as attachments in the hire action sent to HR.

## Resources

[CHM Letters of Reference Policy](#)

[MSU Letters of Reference Policy](#)

CHM Promotion Guidelines and Criteria for each system

[Tenure System](#)

[Health Programs](#)

Fixed Term criteria vary by focus area; see details [here](#).

[Research System](#)

Academic Specialist criteria are unique to the position but should be aligned with [the college guidance](#).

[CHM Guidance on DEI in RPT](#), with [examples](#)

[MSU Review Process for Appointments Granting Tenure](#)

## Revision History

Last reviewed December 2022 by CHM Office of Faculty Affairs and Development