



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE
DAVIS, CA 95616
TEL: (530) 752-4964
FAX: (530) 752-2400
INTERNET: <http://provost.ucdavis.edu>

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Dear Colleagues:

Professional Researcher, Project Scientist and Specialist titles are widely used in support of campus research efforts; these titles have similar, but distinct roles and expectations for appointment and career advancement. Appointment in these titles has the expectation that the appointee will be provided support that enables them to conduct research and succeed in their academic career positions, as defined by APM criteria for their respective titles.

To clarify these expectations, the Office of the Vice Provost- Academic Affairs, working with the Academic Federation, has generated a straightforward, side-by-side comparison of these title series (see attached). This has been distributed to personnel evaluation committees and staff. A further goal for this process is to inform the larger academic community including Deans and Department Chairs, Academic Federation and Academic Senate members about these titles. The hope is that this will clarify expectations for successful career advancement. This is important so that appointees, and those who appoint and evaluate them, set expectations based on the same criteria. The use of appropriate criteria, titles and matching position descriptions is also expected to result in fewer delays in appointments.

We want to avoid situations where individuals are appointed into titles that do not match their expected professional activities, and within which they are unlikely to meet expectations for advancement. For example, Professional Researchers have automatic PI status because the expectation is that they will lead significant projects of their own and will apply for funding in the PI role. Project Scientists play more of a support role on larger projects, and in keeping with this expectation, they must apply for PI status by exception. The critical support role played by Project Scientists on larger projects carries with it an expectation of co-authorship on publications. In contrast, Specialists' contributions can be recognized in the Acknowledgements section of manuscripts or through supporting letters.

We encourage you to share this memo and accompanying chart with the PIs in your department, as well as with Academic Federation members in these titles.

Thank you for helping us to assure that all our career academic employees are provided opportunities to succeed in their positions and to advance the research mission of UC Davis.

Best regards,

Handwritten signature of Maureen L. Stanton in black ink.

Maureen L. Stanton
Vice Provost—Academic Affairs

Handwritten signature of Laura Van Winkle in blue ink.

Laura Van Winkle
Chair, Academic Federation