

# COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

December 18, 2019

TO: Departmental Administrators

FROM: Pearl Spiro  
Associate Provost, Academic Appointments

SUBJECT: Reclassification of Staff Officers of Research

This is a follow-up to the e-mail that you received from Interim Provost Ira Katznelson on December 5, 2019 announcing the reclassification of all staff associates and senior staff associates into six new categories (three for each title). As noted, the reclassification on the Morningside campus will start on January 1, 2020 and should be completed by July 1, 2020. The following will provide guidance on the procedures to be followed to hire new staff officers into the appropriate categories after January 1, 2020 and to review all current staff associates and senior staff associates to ensure that their accomplishments are properly recognized in the new title structure.

## Revised Questionnaire for New Staff Officers of Research

Attached is the revised "Questionnaire for New Staff Officers of Research" which requires the position to be ranked as part of its establishment. The Reclassification Matrix that was linked to the e-mail from Interim Provost Katznelson should be used as a guide for determining the proper rank for the new position.

The review and approval process for the Questionnaire remains unchanged. All new positions or positions that are being revised to reflect a change in the position's responsibilities must be approved by the relevant chair, director, dean or executive vice president and the Division of Academic Appointments in the Office of the Provost. (This should not be confused with the reclassification effort which deals with the responsibilities of the current incumbent, not with the position itself.)

Students: It will not be necessary to complete a Questionnaire for students from other universities who are being appointed staff associates so that they can do research on their Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation under the guidance of a Columbia faculty member. Students working on their Master's thesis should be appointed Staff Associate I; doctoral students should be appointed Staff Associate II.

Questionnaires are not needed for doctoral students who have successfully defended their dissertations but who cannot yet be appointed as postdoctoral research scholars/scientists because they have not deposited their dissertations. They should be appointed as Staff Associate

II once they have been granted Affirmative Action clearance. However, if by some chance they do not deposit their dissertations within the period for which they have received Affirmative Action clearance, a review of their qualifications as a staff associate must be completed and their classification confirmed.

### Postings in RAPS for Staff Officers of Research

All new positions for staff associates or senior staff associates posted on or after January 1, 2020 in RAPS require an approved Staff Officer Questionnaire which classifies the position into one of the new categories. While RAPS as a system cannot accept the newly defined categories, once you have selected the generic Staff Associate or Senior Staff Associate title, you will be able to add the appropriate level to the title (e.g., Staff Associate I, Senior Staff Associate III).

All existing positions which become vacant must be classified and the Questionnaire approved before the posting can be submitted into RAPS. The principal investigator should work with their departmental administrator and the office of the relevant dean or executive vice president to ensure that the position to be posted is accurately described and that any changes that occurred during the appointment of the last incumbent have been taken into consideration in the classification.

There should be no open title searches for all categories of staff associates or senior staff associates since these categories are based on the work that needs to be done. This means that one search cannot encompass Staff Associate I/Staff Associate II/Staff Associate III; or Senior Staff Associate I/Senior Staff Associate II/ Senior Staff Associate III. In rare circumstances, open searches could be conducted for Staff Associate I/II or Senior Staff Associate I/II when positions are carefully defined, to allow the selection of the best candidate available in either classification.

### Reclassification of All Current Staff Associates and Senior Staff Associates

With the exception of those staff associates appointed until they deposit their dissertations, all currently appointed staff officers of research need to be reclassified by their current appointment end date or by June 30, 2020, whichever is earlier, so that they can be reappointed into the appropriate classification. To help expedite this project, attached are the following materials:

- 1) a copy of the announcement from the Interim Provost announcing the reclassification;
- 2) the Reclassification Matrix which defines the characteristics of each new rank of staff officer of research;
- 3) a list of all the staff associates and senior staff associates in your school, department institute, or center who need attention; and
- 4) a timeline outlining the deadlines by which each segment of the reclassification should be finished to meet the July 1, 2020 date for completion of the reclassification.

Note that those staff officers of research whose current appointments end prior to June 30, 2020 should be reviewed according to a schedule that allows their reclassification to be determined and confirmed before their current end date if they are to be reappointed.

All faculty, principal investigators, and staff officers of research received a copy of the Interim Provost's announcement in November so they are aware of this project. At the beginning of January my office will distribute another e-mail to the staff associates and senior staff associates reminding them of the project and requesting that they send updated *curricula vitae* reflecting their current responsibilities to their departmental administrators no later than by January 31, 2020.

To accomplish the reclassification in time for the reappointment cycle at the end of May the following schedule, as given in the timeline attached, is recommended:

- 1) By the beginning of February departmental administrators should send the principal investigators copies of the updated *curricula vitae* they receive as result of the e-mail mentioned above as well as the job descriptions on file for each of the staff officer positions reporting to them.
- 2) By February 29, 2020 the departmental administrators should meet with the principal investigators to update the job descriptions and determine the appropriate reclassification for each staff officer of research. A justification should be prepared to accompany the recommendation.
- 3) By March 31, 2020 the chairs, deans, and directors who report to an executive vice president or dean should review the revised job descriptions and confirm the proposed reclassification for the staff officers of research in their departments, institutes, or centers and send their recommendations to their respective deans or executive vice president.
- 4) By April 15, 2020 my staff in consultation with the offices of the executive vice president, deans, and directors who report directly to the Provost will review the *curricula vitae* and job descriptions and confirm the proposed reclassifications. A copy of the recommendation justifying the reclassification should be included.
- 5) Beginning May 18, 2020 departmental administrators will be able to submit the necessary transactions to reappoint the staff officers of research with their new titles reflecting their reclassification, thus meeting year-end deadlines for reappointments and salary increases.

Please feel free to contact Carmen DeLeon, Zeid Sitnica, or me if you would like to discuss the procedures in more detail or if you have any specific questions as you proceed through the process. We are committed to helping you through this reclassification to ensure that the staff officers of research who play such a crucial role in the scholarly life of the University attain the recognition they deserve for their efforts.

cc: Interim Executive Vice President for Arts and Sciences  
Deans of Schools  
Departmental Chairs  
Directors of Institutes and Centers