



Getting Started as a New Faculty Member

Academic Career Boot Camp—10 Tips!

Welcome to the OU Health Sciences Center Faculty!

There is great work to be done as a University based educator, scientist/scholar, and/or clinician. So let's get you started on building a solid foundation for a rewarding and productive academic career!

The 10-Tips that follow grew from myriad questions new faculty have asked over the years. Some of the tips focus on actions you can take today, others are aimed at helping you plan ahead. Faculty responsibilities change over time, but some are established before you arrive while others emerge as you grow into the position and as your department priorities evolve. As such, these 10 Tips are not the only information you'll want or need. Discuss them, and the questions that arise as you read them. Your Department Chair, Dean and colleagues can be great resources to help you with start-up in this role. We're glad you're here and look forward to your future with us!

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10 Tips for New Faculty Getting Started

- 1. Within 4 to 6 months of your new faculty appointment review duties and expectations of the position with your supervisor.**

GOAL: *Your expectations as a faculty member and the expectations of your supervisor should be aligned. Fulfilling your responsibilities should facilitate attainment of results that matter for academic career progress.*

Your Department Chair, Section Chief or Program Director will likely be your supervisor. Whoever fills this role is a key person for offering you guidance and feedback and, then

evaluating your performance each year. If you are not sure who has primary responsibility for those tasks, ask your Department Chair or your College Dean.

Starting a new job, or taking on new or additional responsibilities as a faculty member can be both exciting and daunting. Academic health centers are vibrant settings with full portfolios of educational, research, patient care and community service programs. In your new faculty role, some responsibilities will be immediately clear and explicit. Other roles, shared with team members, may be less concretely defined. Over the course of your first academic year, how you “fit” and what is expected of you should become clearer. But, you don’t have to wait on the passage of time to start painting a clearer picture for yourself. Start to shape that picture by re-reading your “letter of offer.”

Usually a “preliminary” letter of offer is a brief job description that includes basic information about your teaching, research and clinical/service responsibilities when you start the faculty job. Roles and duties may change over time, but after you’ve been on board for four to six months you should have a picture of how work in each area is taking shape, what you’ve done to get settled in, and what is needed next to stay on track, make progress and report results by the end of the year. After 4-6 months on the job you know enough to sit down with your supervisor for a **check-in conversation**. That is a good time to let your supervisor know if things are moving faster or slower than anticipated in any of your expected roles. Talk about how the pace may or may not affect expected results for the year and if other guidance is needed to move ahead.

- 2. Develop annual goals and career goals for each mission – teaching, research/scholarship, and service. Examine your time commitments.**

GOAL: *Use annual goals to establish short-term targets that focus your work and progress using specific objectives and activities. Establish career goals to describe outcomes*



Do you know the answers to these questions? Check out Section 3 of the **OUHSC Faculty Handbook** to learn:

- What is the difference between a “Full-Time faculty appointment” and a “Temporary” Appointment?
- Where will I find my initial responsibilities and duties as a faculty member described?
- What is a “consecutive term appointment”? What is the difference between that and a “tenure track” appointment?
- What does “academic freedom” mean for me as a new faculty member at OU Health Sciences Center?
- What does the University expect me to do to advance in academic rank and advance in my career?
- When and how will my performance and accomplishments be evaluated?

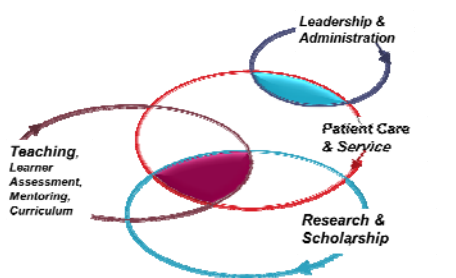
The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center **Faculty Handbook** (2012) Section 3, addresses “Faculty Personnel Policies and General Information.” This section is especially useful for new faculty who are getting started.

that can best be measured as meaningful over time —such as 3 to 5 years.

A sports analogy may help explain the difference between *annual* and *career* goals. An **annual goal is short term**. In career terms it is like the goal of winning a specific football game. As a player, you know you can't accomplish "the win" by yourself. However, you use all your practice and preparation to ensure that your skills work to the advantage of your team. You must be at the top of your game. When everyone on your team is playing well (or if the other team plays poorly), you and your team win! In academic terms, each year, your work contributes to the department's success through one or more of the following:

- A. Teaching and assessing the learners
- B. Advancing scholarship and/or conducting research, and
- C. Delivering care to patients or service to the internal or external community.

Each aspect of the academic mission has its own sphere, and the spheres have areas of overlap. The overlaps may be shallow or deep depending on the breadth and depth of faculty work in the sphere.



Venn Diagram representing threefold mission of the Academic Health Center— teaching, research/scholarship and service spheres. At the overlap is our academic sweet spot where the synergy of faculty work in each mission can lead to great outcomes.

How would this Venn diagram look for you today? How is your time allocated to each mission? What about *career goals*...

Career goals address the longer term—three to five years. Career goals tend to be bigger and broader. Evidence of goal attainment may require looking at the larger picture and the *impact of your contributions over time on the people, places or things that have garnered your attention.*

3. Identify appropriate metrics and benchmarks for each OUHSC mission.

GOAL: Be concrete in your thinking about how your contributions will be measured. There are internal/local, regional and national standards for demonstrating compe-

tence and expertise. Learn about and use the standards that are respected in your field.

Discuss benchmarks and metrics with your supervisor and your mentors to be sure they are appropriate to this stage of your academic career and that they prepare you with sufficient challenge for the next career step.

4. Set measurable objectives.

GOAL: Specify what you will measure as a way to value and assess the return on your invested time and talent.

Once you know what the standards of measurement should be then use them to add a quantitative measure to your objectives. If you cannot quantify the work, then identify the qualitative benchmark and determine how that will fit your **objectives**. Thinking ahead about what you will measure and what those measures mean in comparing you and your results to local, regional and national/international standards will help you be specific about the outputs, products and outcomes you achieve. In other words, you can say clearly how many touchdowns you made and assisted!

5. Create a development plan with your supervisor. Lifelong learning tied to career goals can be informative.

GOAL: Partner with your Department Chair or supervisor to take the long view of your academic career trajectory.

Achieving your goals will require you to use, polish and continue to refine your skills. Your education, training and work experience prior to joining the faculty may not have covered all the roles you will be asked to take on once you take on a faculty title. A personal career development plan gives you and your supervisor a way to look at the road ahead, what you aspire to accomplish, and consider what support you may need in the environment, or for your own continued growth. A career development plan invites and documents the partnership between you and your department chair.

6. Identify a mentor and/or coach – convene your career advisory board.

GOAL: Seek guidance broadly— that means a diverse array of people should be part of your career advisory board.

A career advisory board should include people you trust who can inspire you, make you perspire, encourage you to aspire to great things, and help you enjoy and celebrate when you achieve a goal.

7. Prepare an annual report summarizing your work; share with your supervisor before each annual review.

GOAL: Report your progress!

A brief, one to two-page annual report or memo that summarizes your work and accomplishments during the year in a succinct and factual way can be helpful. It provides concrete information, it can undergird meaningful annual feedback and it can contribute to your pre-promotion documentation.

8. Meet with your supervisor for feedforward, feedback and annual review.

GOAL: Looking back over what worked and what didn't can help you look ahead with clearer vision about what's possible.

We all need and want constructive and useful feedback. Set time aside to participate.

9. Request written feedback on your work products and progress from peers and senior colleagues.

GOAL: Start a file, paper and/or electronic, that includes your feedback and evaluation material.

Use the feedback you receive to adjust your activities, objectives and goals for the next year, as appropriate. Think about how you will use the information to improve your process, work products, or outcomes for those who are the intended beneficiaries of your time and talents (e.g., students, patients, community, and so forth).

10. Request mid-course peer review of your progress (after 2.5 to 3 years as a faculty member).

GOAL: Plan ahead. Do not wait until the last minute to understand how others see and value your progress and contributions.

Use a mid-course review to note major areas to sustain, and identify what to jettison and/or improve. Acknowledge any changes in expectations by you and/or your supervisor.



For additional information about Getting Started at OUHSC or to register for New Faculty Orientation (NFO) or the "Aligning Goals" faculty workshop in Oklahoma City or Tulsa, contact the office of:

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