

Guide to Part-time and Adjunct Clinical (MD) Academic Appointments at University of Toronto

This summary guide will help physicians, academic leaders and administrators at the Hospitals and the University understand and manage part-time and adjunct clinical (MD) academic faculty appointments at University of Toronto (UofT). It covers common but not necessarily all scenarios which are described in the reference documents.¹ Though it focuses on part-time and adjunct clinical academic appointments, it includes information on full-time clinical academic appointments, for context.

The term “clinical” is used at UofT to denote faculty members who are licensed physicians. At UofT, it appears sometimes as “Clinical (MD);” the “MD” will be omitted in the rest of this document. The terms “faculty” and “academic” refer to University appointments or appointees. The phrases “clinical faculty” and “clinical academic” refer to physicians who have University appointments. “Preceptor” means a University-appointed physician at a community Hospital affiliate or other community setting, who is paid to teach clinical clerks and residents in the course of providing clinical care.

Clinical faculty at UofT - the covering policy

At UofT, physicians work under many policies that apply to all University appointees.² But when it comes to academic appointments, which define physicians’ relationships with the University, University policy separates licensed physicians from others. The *Policy for Clinical Faculty*³ and *Procedures Manual for Policy for Clinical (MD) Faculty* (the *Procedures Manual*),⁴ the key sources, show that

- only clinical faculty have appointment categories called “full-time clinical academic,” “part-time clinical academic” and “adjunct clinical academic”
- pay source(s) and levels are not related to appointment category or rank
- most full-time clinical academic faculty are in conforming academic practice plans

The *Procedures Manual* and other sources detail the rationale and rules for clinical faculty.⁵ The *Procedures Manual* has served academic physicians, the University and hospitals well. For example, dispute resolution clauses in the *Procedures Manual* have guided process in difficult situations.

Clinical faculty appointments at UofT have four attributes

A clinical faculty appointment at UofT has at least four, and sometimes five attributes:

- University Clinical **Department**⁶
- Academic appointment **Category**: full-time clinical, part-time clinical or adjunct clinical
- **Rank**: lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor or full professor
- **Relevant site**: where the clinical academic work is performed
- **Academic Position Description**:⁷ mandatory for **full-time** clinical and **part-time** clinical faculty; at the Chair’s discretion for **adjunct** clinical faculty

¹ E.g. you will read about 3 appointment categories, not a rare 4th, “Visiting Clinical Professor”

² E.g. penalizing research misconduct

³ [Policy for Clinical Faculty](#)

⁴ [Procedures Manual for Policy for Clinical Faculty](#)

⁵ Along with other regulations that protect patients, learners and clinical faculty, such as those of government, CPSO, hospital and other organizations.

⁶ The University Clinical Departments are Anaesthesia, Family and Community Medicine, Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology, Medical Imaging, Medicine, Obstetrics/Gynaecology, Ophthalmology and Vision Sciences, Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Radiation Oncology, Surgery. These official names may differ from the department names in hospitals

⁷ Such as clinician-teacher or clinician-scientist

Department

Above all, a clinical academic appointment requires a signed agreement (Chair's offer letter) between the physician candidate appointee and the Chair of a University Department.⁸ The Faculty of Medicine or University of Toronto cannot appoint a physician without a University Department.

Generally, a University Department grants appointments by these principles:

1. The Department Chair recommends an appointment with category and rank, for Dean's approval
2. A candidate may not receive an appointment without offer from the Department Chair
3. Appointment privileges confer responsibilities and expectations
4. Appointees must demonstrate professional attributes as role models
5. Appointees have rights according to their degree of academic engagement
6. Departments appoint physicians in their own disciplines, irrespective of the learners' disciplines
7. Physicians teaching core⁹ programs require University appointments
8. Physicians who evaluate learners require University appointments

The responsibilities and expectations of clinical faculty include providing a CPSO Certificate of Professional Conduct at initial appointment (a copy from the Hospital's file is acceptable, see below); and self-reporting adverse CPSO events when they occur.¹⁰

Appointment Category

The *Procedures Manual* defines and describes the appointment categories of clinical faculty, as follows:¹¹

Full-time clinical academic

- Active Hospital staff at fully-affiliated or community affiliated Hospital
- Participates in a conforming academic practice plan or equivalent that supports academic work financially
- Academic work including teaching during patient care > 80% of professional time
- 3-5 year probation, then termination or continuing annual appointment; continuing annual appointment terminated only for cause.
- May grieve against a University official or academic freedom
- Must have an academic position description

Part-time clinical academic:

- Practices at a community or fully affiliated Hospital or other affiliated site, which must be covered under an affiliation agreement with the University
- May or may not participate in an academic practice plan
- Academic work between 20% and 80% of professional time
- One year appointment; at year end¹² Chair may renew or terminate without cause

⁸ Though a hospital department chief or other leader may discuss or support a University appointment, only the Chair's signed offer letter, co-signed by the appointee, is official.

⁹ As opposed to elective; defined by the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education Deans

¹⁰ From the [Procedures Manual for Policy for Clinical Faculty](#): "Self-reporting of a criminal investigation or conviction, or finding or investigation related to professional conduct (as described in Definitions 2.30), must be made by all clinical faculty to the Department Chair within seven working days of receipt of notification or knowledge of such a conviction, finding or investigation. If this conviction or finding is historical (i.e. more than seven days) and regardless of the jurisdiction in which it was made, the clinical faculty member is expected to report it to the University Department Chair."

¹¹ With increasing academic work, rights and responsibilities grow, such as rights to grieve and receive automatic appointment renewal, and responsibilities to undergo 3-year review and join practice plans

¹² Year-end: For probationary full-time clinical academic appointments, year-end refers to the appointment anniversary date. For part-time, adjunct and post-probation full-time clinical academic appointments, year-end refers to the end of the academic year, as determined by the Department

- May grieve against a University official, but not academic freedom¹³
- Must have an academic position description

Adjunct clinical academic

- Practices at a community affiliate Hospital, affiliated community practice, or at a non-affiliated site, e.g., private practice
- Does not participate in an academic practice plan
- Academic work < 20% of professional time
- Appointment duration at Chair's discretion; at any time Chair may terminate without cause; often reviewed at year end.¹⁴
- May not grieve a University official or academic freedom
- May have an academic position description, at discretion of the Chair

Hospital affiliation status and the terms of the Hospital-University affiliation agreements are more important determinants of University appointment category than is the proportion of time spent in academic work.¹⁵

Academic Rank

Generally, a community preceptor or other part-time or adjunct clinical faculty will be appointed initially at lecturer, and, irrespective of appointment category, be eligible for promotion based on scholarly achievement including teaching performance. Having a Master's degree and recent publications or curriculum development may support but does not guarantee assistant professor rank, especially without substantial recent scholarly work. The Chair must seek peer review by the Department Appointments Committee, and rank is judged ultimately at the decanal level.

The Centre for Faculty Development (CFD, <http://cfd.utoronto.ca/>) is a resource for faculty members who wish to access learning for their roles as teachers and educators. The CFD provides numerous learning opportunities for all levels of teaching experience and excellence, including strategies to prepare for promotion. University appointees participate in the CFD's centrally offered programs at no charge. The CFD's programs are highly rated; many faculty learners return for more advanced learning opportunities. All programs provide continuing education credits.

Appointment Category and Academic Rank Differ

Appointment category does not recognize scholarly merit. It is based on time commitment and practice site affiliation, and is bi-directional (adjunct clinical to part-time clinical then back to adjunct clinical is possible). Movement between appointment categories is neither promotion nor demotion; it reflects a change in time commitment and academic engagement. Changing category is simpler than promotion. The exception is full-time clinical academic appointments which involve probation, three-year review and membership in a conforming academic practice plan or equivalent.

Academic rank recognizes scholarly achievement including teaching, is uni-directional from lecturer through full professor (no demotion), gets more difficult at higher ranks, and comes with more application requirements and rigour.

Chair, normally June 30.

¹³ Exceptions may allow right to grieve academic freedom

¹⁴ See note #12

¹⁵ E.g. a physician with > 20% academic time commitment and not working in a University affiliate (eg private practice), is adjunct clinical academic

Relevant site

Relevant sites are the clinical institution or settings where the academic work of clinical faculty occurs. Under the Hospital-University affiliation agreements, and Policy for Clinical Faculty and its Procedures, active medical staff at fully affiliated Hospitals generally are full-time clinical academic appointees, and in exceptions, part-time clinical academic. At community affiliates, a wider variety of appointments is found – part-time clinical academic, adjunct clinical academic, and full-time clinical academic for those who participate in conforming academic practice plans.

Academic Position Description

Physicians holding full-time and part-time clinical academic appointments must have academic position descriptions which state the academic work agreed to by the physician, University department Chair and, usually, the Hospital department chief. Most preceptors at community affiliate hospitals are clinician-teachers. The University Departments have templates for this purpose.

Fictitious Example:

Dr. Green, an anesthesiologist at two community affiliate hospitals, was just appointed as a part-time clinical lecturer with an academic position description as a clinician-teacher. Dr. Green wonders what titles she should use when signing professional correspondence.

By convention, Dr. Green would state her name, rank, Department and University, but NOT her University appointment category or academic position description: “Dr. Anne Green, Lecturer, Department of Anesthesia, University of Toronto.” Dr. Green may insert or omit Hospital and other positions according to her preference eg “Lecturer, Department of Anesthesia, Trillium Health Centre and University of Toronto” or “Active Staff, Trillium Health Centre, Lecturer, Department of Anesthesia, University of Toronto.” The University encourages faculty to include University affiliations in professional signatures, especially on academic publications. However, it may not be appropriate to state University affiliation for matters unrelated to the physician’s role in the University.

NOTE: the term “adjunct professor” is an honorific title bestowed on some non-physician faculty at the University of Toronto; it has different meanings at some other Universities. That title has no relationship to the physician appointment category “adjunct clinical academic” under the Policy for Clinical Faculty. It is inaccurate and inappropriate for an adjunct clinical academic appointee to sign or otherwise self-designate as “adjunct professor.”

Clinical Faculty appointments and financial compensation

As a general rule, a clinical faculty appointment does not come with financial compensation from the University except in specific situations (eg Education Director). As of April 1, 2011, certain eligible community preceptors may be given clinical faculty appointments that provide for financial compensation under funding arrangements that may be term-limited. Preceptors cannot be compensated for precepting without such an appointment.

Re-appointments of preceptors as clinical faculty will be made at the discretion of the University Department Chair according to the *Procedures Manual for Policy for Clinical Faculty*. For preceptors who have been compensated under an appointment, re-appointment will not necessarily mean continuation of compensation; decisions regarding compensation are made separately.