

Academic Specialist Appointment Options: Continuing Appointment System vs. Fixed Term

Academic Specialists at Michigan State University are considered academic staff. Academic Specialists may be appointed on a fixed-term or continuing basis, full-time or part-time, with either an academic year (nine-month) or an annual (twelve-month) duty assignment. Assignments for all academic specialists involve applicable assigned duties (academic advising/teaching/curriculum development, research, and service/outreach responsibilities) and related professional development activities. For academic specialists appointed on an annual (AN) year basis, salaries are paid in twelve monthly installments on the last working day of each month except for individuals appointed on an annual basis for less than 12 months who receive salaries on a monthly basis during the stipulated period. The academic specialist appointed on an academic year (AY) basis is normally assigned duties during the period August 16 to May 15; salaries are paid in ten installments on the last working day of the month over the duty period, August 16 through May 15. There is no vacation entitlement apart from official University holidays for academic specialists with an academic year appointment. The academic specialist appointed on an annual basis is assigned duties for a full calendar year or the specified period of appointment and is eligible for stipulated vacation periods and official University holidays.

The fixed-term academic specialist is appointed with an end date on an academic year or annual basis or for shorter periods. Positions funded with grant or other non-general funds typically are fixed term in nature. If funding allows, and performance reviews are satisfactory, end dates may be extended through the reappointment process, for a period of one year or less, and may continue to be reappointed annually.

An academic specialist appointed in the continuing system does not have an end date, and is typically funded on recurring, general funds. The continuing system academic specialist is initially appointed to a probationary appointment. Once two probationary periods are completed (three years each), and after a successful review of the second probationary period, continuing status is granted to the specialist. Continuing appointment status assures that the academic specialist will not be dismissed due to capricious action by the University. This appointment option is often used when continual funding of a position is expected. No reappointment actions are necessary with this appointment process.