University Research Associate

Policy

1. **Rationale**

   The position of University Research Associate is intended primarily to be a full-time research position for a person having academic qualifications similar to those required for appointment to the faculty. The individual may attain project tenure but continuation of the position will be dependent upon the availability of funds.

2. **Creation of Appointment**

   Any Faculty or department may propose the creation of a University Research Associateship and forward a recommendation to the Dean. A major requirement for the creation of this position is that funds to cover salary, benefits, and relocation costs be available either from an external institution (e.g. TRIUMF), from University administered funds (such as NSERC grants), or from University funds.

   Adequate funds for a position must be available for at least the first two years and where an appointment will be made for three years, funds must be available for three years. A faculty member will be responsible as Supervisor for the work carried out by such an appointee. Where the funding is administered by an external institution the Supervisor will be expected to liaise with the director of that agency during the appointment of the individual.

   A University Research Associate position will be created when established by the Dean.

3. **Type of appointment**

   Recommendation for appointment requires the support of the faculty members concerned and the approval of the Faculty Dean.

   1. **Term Appointment**

      Term appointments of University Research Associates normally will be made for a two year period but appointments of three years duration may be made if funds are available. This may be followed by further renewals. Appointments will be concluded according to Policy A 10.01, Category C.

   2. **Project Tenure Appointment**

      "Project tenure" may be granted to a University Research Associate. "Project tenure" is an appointment that will continue until the project is terminated or until the appointee reaches retirement age, whichever is earlier. The probability of long-term continuance of the project and of supporting funds will be important criteria in granting "Project tenure". Appointments will be concluded according to Policy A 10.01, Category C.
4. **Conditions of Employment**

1. **Benefits**

   (1) A University Research Associate (“URA”) appointed under Policy R50.01 is able to participate in the benefit plans which are available to SFU faculty as described in Policy A 21.01 excluding the Academic Pension Plan, the BC College Pension Plan, professional development allowance, computer subsidy, and sabbatical leave.

   (2) Relocation expenses will be provided in accordance with the policy governing such expenses for SFU faculty.

   (3) A University Research Associate is entitled to one month’s vacation each year at a time to be determined in consultation with the Supervisor.

   (4) Effective July 1, 2021, no one is eligible or permitted to join the SFU Academic Pension Plan (“APP”) regardless of which university policy or collective agreement or letter of appointment (or reappointment or renewal or extension) governs their employment. This rule applies to a new URA appointed under Policy R50.01, as well as to the reappointment of an existing URA and to the renewal or extension of an existing URA’s appointment.

   (5) A URA who was appointed (or reappointed, or renewed, or extended) under Policy R50.01 prior to November 25, 2021, whose current appointment (or reappointment or renewal or extension) commenced prior to November 25, 2021, and who was participating in the APP prior to November 25, 2021, may remain in the APP until the end date of the URA’s current appointment (whether that current appointment was an initial appointment, a reappointment, a renewal, or an extension) or until the APP is wound up, whichever first occurs.

   (a) If such URA is thereafter reappointed, or renewed, or extended, the URA will not be eligible to remain in the APP. If the URA meets the definition of Long-Term or Recurring Limited Term (as set out below) the URA will be eligible to participate in the Group Retirement Savings Plan of Simon Fraser University (“Group RRSP”) into which the University will contribute a total of 10% of the URA’s pensionable earnings (less a CPP offset to a maximum of $419.40) during the term of the URA’s then current appointment.

   (6) A URA who was appointed (or reappointed, or renewed, or extended) under Policy R50.01 whose current appointment (whether that current appointment was an initial appointment, a reappointment, a renewal or an extension) commenced on or after November 25, 2021 is not eligible to participate in the APP. Where such URA meets the definition of Long-Term or Recurring Limited Term (as set out below) the URA will be eligible to participate in the Group RRSP into which the University will contribute a total of 10% of the URA’s pensionable earnings (less a CPP offset to a maximum of $419.40) during the term of the URA’s current appointment.

   (7) For the purposes of this policy:

   Long-Term means full-time and part-time employees who have an appointment of more than one year.

   Recurring Limited Term means full-time and part-time URAs who have held URA appointments totaling at least one year over a four year period. Recurring Limited Term status shall be maintained during any subsequent appointment, except if more than four years have elapsed since the end of the last appointment.

   Short-term refers to full-time and part-time URAs who are on an appointment of one year or less. In the event that a URA originally appointed for a term of one year or less is reappointed so that the total length of continuous appointment is more than one year, the URA shall start receiving the benefits as though the employee was a long-term employee when they have completed one year’s service, but this shall not be retroactive to the initial year of service.
2. **Salary Review**

The review of progress and salary of the appointee shall be the responsibility of the Supervisor and shall be consistent with University practices.

3. **Committee Work**

University Research Associates may serve on committees with the prior approval of the Supervisor.

4. **Teaching Assistance**

After prior approval of the Supervisor, a University Research Associate may be invited by a department to give seminars, lectures or courses.

If such a course or series of lectures requires the setting of a university examination, then regulations of the University will apply to such lectures and examinations.

5. **Supervision of Graduate Students**

University Research Associates may be invited by a department to serve, after prior approval of the University Research Associate's Supervisor, as member of supervisory and examining committees for both Masters and Doctoral candidates.

5. **Reappointment**

1. Reappointment will require the reauthorization of the position of University Research Associate and approval of the recommended candidate by the various authority levels in the same manner as an initial appointment (Sections 2 and 3).

Supervisors recommending reappointment should endeavour to make the necessary recommendations at least six months prior to an appointee's termination date.

6. **Termination and Dismissal**

1. **Termination**

Notwithstanding the following, an appointment may be terminated because of failure to carry out required duties.

   1.1 Termination of Term Appointment. An appointee's term appointment shall terminate on the last day specified in the letter of appointment, unless he/she has received and accepted a written offer of reappointment concluded in the same manner as described in 3.

   1.2 Notice of Termination of Project Tenure Appointment. Where there is uncertainty about the continuation of a project or its funding, or when it is anticipated that a project will terminate, the maximum possible notice (preferably twelve months) will be given to a University Research Associate holding a Project Tenure appointment. The supervisor will be required to inform the Dean of the Faculty and the Vice-President, Academic of the expected termination of the project as soon as this is known. The Dean will inform the appointee of the termination of the project and the appointment.

2. Dismissal is the termination of an appointment, without the consent of the appointee, other than at the end of a stated contractual period. Dismissal should occur only for cause. Failure to renew a contract of limited term does not constitute dismissal.

**Interpretation**

Questions of interpretation or application of this policy or its procedures shall be referred to the Vice-President, Academic, whose decision shall be final.