University Research Assistant

1.0 Purpose:

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define a University Research Assistant and provide guidance to faculty members, Departmental Chairs, and Faculty Deans on their obligations when employing and appointing a long-term, full-time University Research Assistant, whose income and benefits is derived from grants or contracts.

1.2 Considering the existing Policies concerning research employees, the University Research Assistant Policy creates a new category of employee to recognize existing long-term, full-time research-funded employees and adequately address their specialized employment status.

2.0 Definitions

Project Appointments of University Research Assistants are for a minimum of two years and will continue until the project is completed or terminated, whichever is earlier. The probability of a project's long-term continuance and of supporting funds will be an important determinant in appointing a University Research Assistant under this criterion. Continuation of this position, as a project appointment, will be dependent upon sustained funding and a demonstrated need for services.

Supervisor refers to the faculty member who will be responsible for: the work carried out by a University Research Assistant, monitoring the eligibility status of the University Research Assistant, and the administration of the University Research Assistant position.

Term Appointments of University Research Assistants will be made for a minimum two-year period but may be longer if sufficient funds are available. Further renewals may be permitted depending on funding availability and a demonstrated need for services.

University Research Assistant is a long-term, full-time research position for an individual possessing the necessary qualifications to conduct lab and/or investigative work.

3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 Eligible individuals, possessing the necessary qualifications to conduct lab and/or investigative work, employed to undertake full-time research duties for a period of two or more years, and who are funded by external grants, contracts, University funds, or a combination of these sources, are considered University Research Assistants by the University and governed in accordance with this Policy.

3.2 The University will entrench the University Research Assistant category of research-funded employees so as to differentiate from shorter-term grant-funded employees. In doing so, the University will be able to recruit and retain long-term University Research Assistants integral to the University's research mandate.

3.3 University Research Assistants appointed under this Policy will receive statutory, non-discretionary, and vacation benefits underwritten by the Supervisor’s funding source as described in Section 7.0.
4.0 Scope

4.1 This policy applies to University Research Assistants, faculty members (Supervisors), Departmental Chairs, and Faculty Deans involved in the creation and administration of a University Research Assistant position.

4.2 This policy does not apply to grant employees as defined by Policy R50.02 (Employment of Personnel Funded from Research) or to Research Assistants whose appointment is less than two years.

5.0 Responsible Persons

5.1 The following persons have responsibilities under this policy:

(a) The Vice-President, Research, has executive jurisdiction for implementing this Policy and addressing any questions on interpretation regarding this Policy.

(b) The Faculty Dean has responsibility for approving a University Research Assistant position. The Office of the Faculty Dean will provide oversight for University Research Assistant positions.

(c) The Department Chair will be responsible for determining the feasibility and eligibility of the University Research Assistant proposal and approving said proposal at a departmental level.

(d) A faculty member may propose to create a University Research Assistant position to his/her Department Chair. Once the Dean has approved a University Research Assistant position, the faculty member, as Supervisor, will be responsible for the work carried out by the University Research Assistant, monitoring the eligibility status of the University Research Assistant, and the administration of the University Research Assistant position. The Supervisor will complete and submit a Payroll Appointment Form for each University Research Assistant to be paid from his/her funding source.

(e) The Payroll Office will administer payment of the University Research Assistant’s salary from the Supervisor’s funding source.

(f) Human Resources will enrol the University Research Assistant in the benefits programs outlined in Section 7.0. Upon request, Human Resources may also assist Supervisors in determining the appropriate wage scales for University Research Assistants.

For additional details, please see the Section 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, and 9.0.

6.0 Procedures for University Research Assistant Appointments

6.1Creation of Appointment

Any faculty member may propose to create a University Research Assistant position to his/her Department Chair. The Department Chair will confirm that 1) he/she has reviewed the proposal, 2) that the funding for the position has been secured, and 3) that the salary and benefits to be charged to the funding source(s) are eligible by funding sponsors.

With consent from the Department Chair, an Application for a University Research Assistant Appointment Form (see Appendix I) will be forwarded to the Faculty Dean. A key requirement for creating this position is that funds to cover salary and benefits are available from external sources, from grant and contract payments, from University funds, or a combination of these sources held by a faculty member.

Adequate funds for a position must be available for at least the first two years. For an appointment longer than two years, sufficient funds must be available for the appointment’s entire duration.

A University Research Assistant position will be created when established by the Dean.
6.2 Principles
The following principles will govern the University Research Assistant position:

(a) A University Research Assistant shall not hold a concurrent position as an Adjunct Professor, a faculty member, University Research Associate, Post-Doctoral Fellow, or a student.

(b) The Supervisor will be responsible for monitoring a University Research Assistant’s individual eligibility status to ensure the appointed University Research Assistant can receive or continually receive compensation from external sponsor or University sources.

(c) The University Research Assistant cannot be paid in the form of a scholarship.

(d) The University Research Assistant may not receive compensation from other sources, as it may have implications on compensation eligibility imposed by external funding sources, without the Supervisor’s permission.

(e) Salary and benefits arrangements must be deemed eligible by external funding sources.

6.3 Reappointment
Reappointment will require the reauthorization of the University Research Assistant position and approval of the recommended candidate by the various authority levels in the same manner as an initial appointment (Sections 2.0, 6.1, and 6.2).

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

If 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 six months, subject to funding) will be given to a University Research Assistant holding a project appointment. The Supervisor will be required to inform the Faculty Dean and the Vice-President, Research, of the expected termination as soon as this is known and will complete the appropriate termination forms to end the Payroll Appointment. The Dean will inform the appointee of the termination of the project and the appointment.

6.4 Termination

(a) Appointment as a University Research Assistant is a term or project appointment that terminates on the end date specified in the letter of appointment.

(b) Either party can terminate the appointment before the specified end date by providing one month’s notice in writing. The University may provide one month’s salary in lieu of notice.

(c) The appointment can be terminated without notice before the specified end date for one of the following reasons:
   (i) Unsatisfactory performance
   (ii) Gross misconduct (e.g. insubordination, theft)
   (iii) Non-performance for reasons outside the employee’s control

7.0 Conditions of Employment

7.1 Benefits

(a) Statutory Benefits
The Supervisor’s funding source will pay the employer’s share of the benefits below, automatically set-up through Payroll upon appointment authorization:
   • Canada Pension Plan
   • Employment Insurance
   • Workers’ Compensation Coverage
(b) **Non-Discretionary Benefits**

The Supervisor’s funding source will cover 50% of the benefits listed below:

- Medical Services Plan of British Columbia
- Extended Health Care Plan
- Dental Care Plan, eligible after one year of continuous service with the same Supervisor (with assured employment for at least another six months).

The appointee will cover the remaining 50% of benefit costs through payroll deductions.

### 7.2 Vacation

The appointee is entitled to 20 days vacation each year at a time to be determined in consultation with the Supervisor.

### 8.0 Procedure Addressing Employment Issues

8.1 A Supervisor will adhere to the responsibilities and regulations outlined in this policy. Should an employment issue arise, the University Research Assistant is encouraged to informally discuss the matter with his/her Supervisor. In the event that the Supervisor dishonoured the responsibilities and regulations of this policy, the University Research Assistant should bring the matter to the attention of the Department Chair, the direct supervisor of the faculty member. If the Department Chair cannot resolve the matter, the University Research Assistant may convey his/her concerns to the Faculty Dean and, lastly, the Vice-President, Research. The decision of the Vice-President, Research shall be considered final.

At each step of this procedure, the Departmental Chair, Faculty Dean, and Vice-President, Research, will respond in a timely manner.

8.2 Conversely, a Supervisor will make clear his/her expectations of the University Research Assistant upon appointment. Should an employment issue arise, the Supervisor is encouraged to informally discuss the matter with the University Research Assistant before initiating more formal measures in consultation and with the approval of Department Chair, Faculty Dean, or Vice-President, Research, as appropriate.

### 9.0 Interpretation

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

### Appendix I

*Application for a University Research Assistant Appointment Form*