



Revisions to Research Personnel Employment Practices

Co-Sponsors:

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Today's Agenda

1. **Current state context and findings**
1. **Efforts to-date**
1. **Proposed changes for discussion**
1. **Proposed implementation timeline**

Objective: Sharing information on changes considered to the employment of research personnel

Current State Context

Issue:

- Current employment practice is that ~1,700 grant-funded research personnel are employed by individual principal investigators (PI's) rather than by SFU.
- SFU policy prevents most contracts longer than one year and prevents personnel from accessing benefits as part of their employment.
- These practices put SFU out of line with many U15 peers (online scan of 13 peers showed 71% of positions were employees of the institutions and most were provided with benefits)

Why act now?

- Policies and practices are dated and set up for an earlier time at SFU
- A growing and more complex research enterprise requires a strong reputation and support structure to maintain competitive position
- Concerns about the current practices have been raised from multiple parties who are seeing trends across Canadian institutions

Impact and Proposal

Impact:

- **Among research personnel**—uncertainty about career, inequity, lack of access to SFU support and benefits.
- **Among PIs**—personal risk, obligations and administrative burden of being an ‘employer’.
- **To SFU**—inability to attract personnel, impacting reputation and research output.

Proposal:

- Revise R50 policies so that ~1,000 research personnel become SFU employees
- Provide them with access to institutional benefits through existing RA plan
- Support PIs with guidance, advice and assistance (as the institution does for supervisors)
- Provide resources to all parties to build awareness of rights and obligations
- Prepare for an April 2019 onboarding for PDFs and September 2019 for other Research Personnel

(additional info on subsequent pages)

Who are the ~1,700 Research Personnel?

- According to policy, there are four categories of personnel
- From payroll extract analysis, we propose bringing on ~1,000 personnel:

Policy	Title	Number	SFU- Employed
R 50.01	University Research Associates	26	Yes
R 50.02	Personnel funded from Research Grants and Contracts	909*	No
R 50.03	Post-doctoral Fellows	110	No
R 50.04	University Research Assistants	8	Yes

*includes some unknown positions paid through research funds

- An additional 620 personnel w/ scholarships paid through research funds are not included in this proposal
- At present, we cannot get more granular breakdown of positions through system data (may be required for implementation)

Efforts Thus Far: Phase 1 report with context and options

2017	Began data analysis internally
January 2018	Retained external consultant to facilitate the development of a report
Jan-Feb 2018	Report development activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• interviews with 22 faculty/staff/students• review of practices at 13 peer institutions• analysis of SFU data extracts for statistics
March 2018	Acceptance of report by Sponsors
April-May 2018	Executive endorsements: VPR, VPFA, VPA, President
Summer 2018	Preparation for Phase 2: Implementation Planning

Five Guiding Principles

1. **Recognize** contributing members of SFU's research community
2. Anticipate the **growth** & maturation of SFU's research enterprise, and the changing needs and expectations of research personnel
3. Re-align **risk** exposure and administrative burden among all parties (personnel, supervisors, SFU)
4. Maintain the **responsiveness** required to continue fostering innovation
5. Provide institutional **support** to members of SFU's research community in line with SFU's commitment to social sustainability

Guiding Principles

1. Recognition
2. Growth & maturation
3. Risk alignment
4. Responsiveness
5. Support to research community

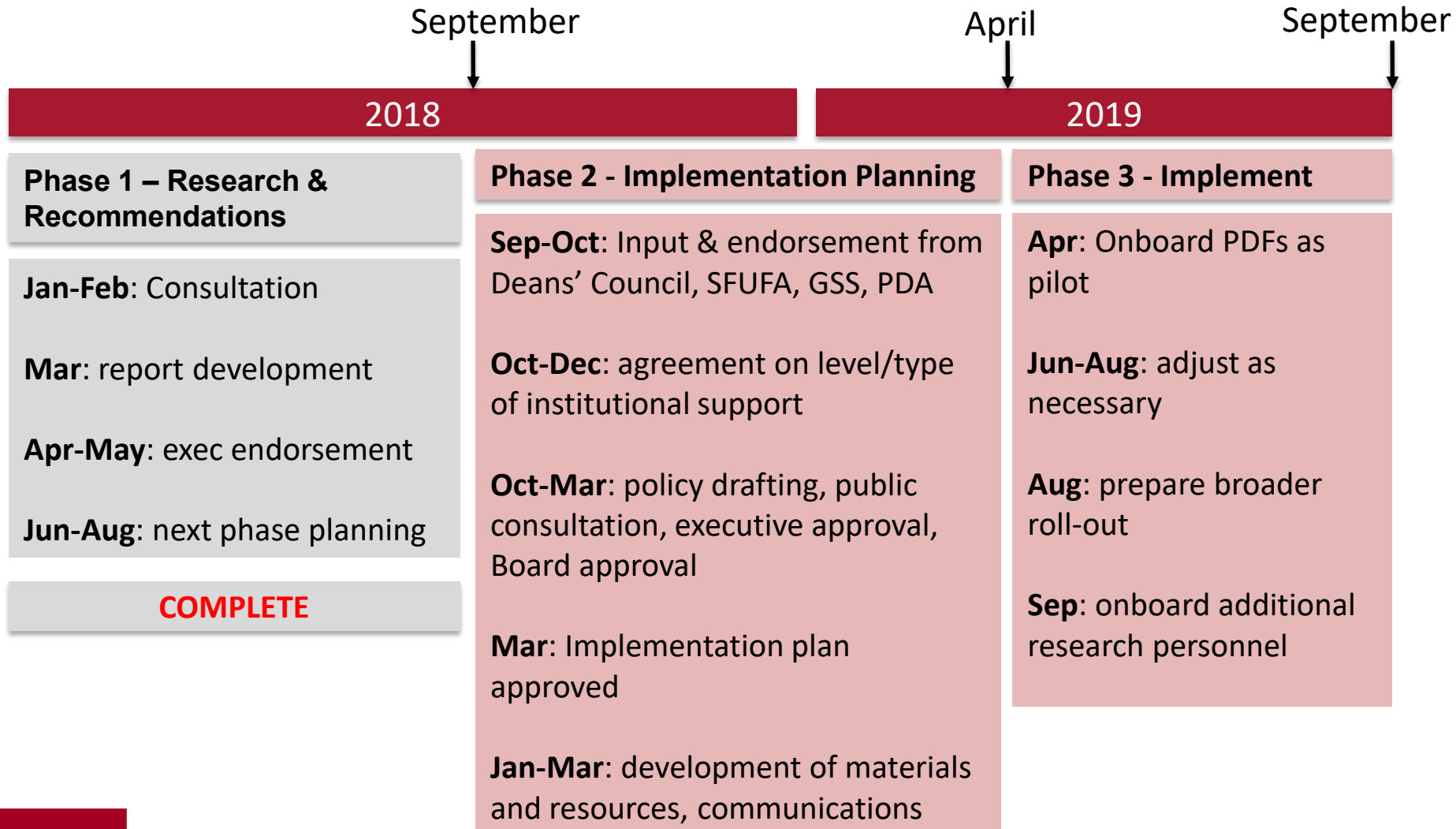
Considerations for discussion

Guiding Principles

1. Recognition
2. Growth & maturation
3. Risk alignment
4. Responsiveness
5. Support to research community

	1	2	3	4	5
1 and 2. Revise R50 policies: designate SFU as employer for the identified personnel and permit grant funding of benefits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Support the employment of professional research employees	✓	✓		✓	✓
4. Provide salary range guidance and minimums to PIs				✓	✓
5. Provide benefits through existing RA plan and provide institutional bridge funding to existing grant holders	✓	✓			✓
6, 7 and 8. Update forms, create web resources, and provide institutional employment advice and administrative assistance			✓	✓	✓
9. Phase in transition, beginning with PDFs (April 2019), then with remaining research personnel (September 2019 onwards)	✓			✓	✓

Proposed implementation timeline for discussion



Reference Material

List of Phase 1 consultations

Participant Name	Title
Faculty Supervisors	
Dr. Fiona Brinkman	Professor, Faculty of Science
Dr. Jeff Derksen	Dean, Office of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Fellows
Dr. Barbara Frisken	Professor, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science
Dr. Wade Parkhouse	Associate VP, Academic
Dr. Charlotte Waddell	Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences
Associations	
Dr. Emma Hodson	VP Policy, Postdoctoral Association
Dr. Vidriana Perez	President, Postdoctoral Association
Dr. Jessica Walsh	VP External Communications, Postdoctoral Association
Pierre Cenerelli*	Executive Director, Graduate Student Society*
Chantal Turpin*	Director of University Relations, Graduate Student Society*
Roshane Miller*	Graduate Student Society*
Department/Faculty Administrators	
Seychelle Cushing	Manager, Big Data Hub
Rose Evans	Manager, Academic and Administrative Services, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science
Gloria Ingram	Director, Office of the VP Research/Past Director, Faculty of Health Sciences
Central Administrators	
Pierre Etienne Banville	Director, Benefits
Stephen Caine	Manager, Risk
Allyson Dallas	Pension & Benefits Specialist, Human Resources
Rose Gonzales	Manager, Payroll Department
Leeann Liew	Manager, Research Accounting
Judith Osborne	Past VP, Legal Affairs
Catherine Stoddart	Director, Faculty Relations
Monica Swanson	Manager, HR Special Projects

List of Peer Institutions Scanned

Project Sponsors agreed to a list of 13 peer institutions to research, including nine U15 members.

- University of British Columbia
- University of Victoria
- University of Northern British Columbia
- University of Calgary
- University of Alberta
- University of Manitoba
- University of Toronto
- Ryerson University
- McMaster University
- University of Saskatchewan
- University of Western Ontario
- University of Waterloo
- University of Guelph

Summary of findings:

- Regarding employment relationship, of the 59 classes identified across the 13 institutions, **71% were identified as employees of the institution**
- Of the 42 classes identified as employees of the institution, information identified **12 (29%) as affiliated with an association or union**. (It is possible that additional affiliations exist)
- Regarding benefits, of the 59 classes, **71% were entitled to benefits** (not the same 71% as first bullet point)