

The logo for Simon Fraser University (SFU), consisting of the letters "SFU" in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid red rectangular background.

Research Personnel Employment Practices Review

May 31st, 2018 – **CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT**

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Highlights

Issue: The issue of rights and obligations of research personnel, principal investigators and SFU the institution goes back many decades. Peer research and internal interviews show that internal policies and accepted practice no longer reflect the needs of stakeholders within SFU, the institution's strategic priorities, nor the wider research landscape at peer institutions. Specifically, SFU's research enterprise has grown and its output relies on a healthy supply of research personnel as key members of the university community. At the same time, an increasing focus on equity and social sustainability is a strategic priority that underpins many of SFU's initiatives.

Upwards of 25% of the university's professional community are not considered employees of the institution (1,673 grant-funded research personnel). They are considered employees of principal investigators or as trainees. Though many are fully-trained and essential contributors, the grant-funded term employment situation means that such personnel are not guaranteed a long-term role and often are not eligible for employer-provided benefits – including health and dental, leaves and access to many SFU services. Research personnel feel undervalued and unrecognized. On the other end, principal investigators may lack the administrative capacity and HR knowledge required to meet the obligations of employer, especially as SFU's focus on research grows. Principal investigators feel that they are taking on risks and responsibilities better suited to SFU (which currently only performs payroll administration for research personnel) and that they are not supported to do their best research.

Impact of Current State: The current state raises uncertainty and inequity among research personnel and principal investigators. This uncertainty leads to risks: risks that employer obligations are not met, risk that employee rights are not upheld and risk that administrative tasks are taking away from a focus on research. The inequity raises risk to SFU's ability to attract research personnel and strong research faculty and ultimately to its ability to conduct research, its research funding trajectory and its reputation. This is therefore an institutional issue that demands an institutional response.

Options Assessment: Four options were assessed (1. status quo, 2. provision of education and training to stakeholders, 3. change in policy to designate SFU as employer and 4. change in policy accompanied by affiliation and likely increase in benefits). Feedback from participants and research demonstrated that the size of risk warranted a change from status quo and likely required more than education and training. This informed our considerations for a future state.

Considerations for Future State:

To address the common themes in the issues identified, the following serve to guide the design of improvements to practices that affect research personnel.

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 (see SFU’s sustainability vision and goals)

The nine following considerations serve to operationalize the guiding principles above.

Considerations (details in section 7.3)	Guiding Principle Supported				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Designate the University as employer for additional classes of research personnel (approximately 1,100 additional staff; not including student RAs)	✓	✓	✓		✓
2. Rewrite R50 policies from the ground up to reflect agreed upon classifications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Support creation of a professional research staff employee group	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Provide salary range guidance to Principal Investigators				✓	✓
5. Make benefits in line with the ‘median’ of peers non-discretionary to permit use of Tri-Council grant funds	✓	✓			✓
6. Educate stakeholders by creating and maintaining resource webpages			✓	✓	✓
7. Provide institutional assistance with administration			✓		✓
8. Update the Payroll Appointment Form (in alignment with policies) to minimize data quality issues				✓	✓
9. Consider a phased transition plan	✓			✓	✓

Irrelevant

Requests/Next Steps: Endorsement of proposed direction, approval to undertake further consultation through August 31 as follows:

- Segment research personnel further with data obtained from department administrators
- Develop benefits options and costs for different segments of personnel, working with HR Benefits team
- Determine specific need for institutional guidance and administration, working with HR and department administrators to determine
- Develop community consultation plans, working with offices of VP Academic, VP Research and Faculty Relations
- Determine timeline and efforts for policy development and employment contract review, working with University Legal Counsel and external counsel as necessary
- Use above work product to develop detailed future state document with costing and implementation plan for University leadership approval

1. Background

Cutting-edge research is core to SFU's strategic vision. For decades, research personnel have been instrumental in realizing this vision. References to Research Assistants date to at least 1973, and by 1975 SFU had 286 research personnel—Scientists, Associates, Postdoctoral Fellows, Technicians, Assistants and related Secretarial and Clerical roles.¹ The employment relationship between such grant-funded research personnel and SFU was raised as an issue even in those days. A 1976 Labour Relations Board of BC ruling held that grant employees were not to be considered employees of SFU for the purposes of collective bargaining.² This direction has been enshrined in SFU's Policy R 50.02, the main policy governing employment of research personnel, effective 1992. This policy serves as guidance to principal investigators and states that "personnel whose income is derived from grant funds remain employees of the grant holder and not the University".³ This distinction is an important one: the employee-employer relationship is a legal relationship that grants certain rights and imposes certain obligations. At SFU, principal investigators hold the statutory obligations of employer for the majority of research personnel, and are currently responsible for the recruitment, offer negotiation, onboarding, administration, termination and ongoing management of their research personnel.

In the years since, the research enterprise at SFU has continued to mature:

- Increase in number and reach of initiatives
- Increase in complexity: additional cross-disciplinary research; partnerships with institutions, agencies and industry
- Six-fold increase in research support personnel from 286 (1976) to ~1,673 (2017)
- Almost three-fold increase in research funding to \$139 million between 2004-2017 (internal figure)
- Policies governing Postdoctoral Fellows (2000) and long-term Research Assistants (2013) were established to further recognize specific classes of research personnel

In parallel, the peer landscape has also shifted: an online scan of various classes of research personnel across 13 peer institutions identified that 71% of classes are entitled to benefits and that 71% of classes are considered employees of the institution. Of the employees, at least 28% of classes are affiliated with a union or association. Some institutions provide formal HR support, reference materials and mandated practices governing salaries and benefit minimums.

In 2018, the existing employment practices and policies pertaining to SFU's research personnel appear suited to an earlier time in SFU's research history. Though SFU offers support through letter templates, department administrative support (depending on the department), benefits enrolment (where eligible and offered), payroll processing as well as an Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the remaining

¹ From data in submissions to Labour Relations Board, 1975, received in hard copy from Sandi de Domenico, January 2018.

² Submissions and Ruling received in hard copy from Sandi de Domenico, January 2018.

³ At that time, a separate policy, R 50.01, recognized longer-term fully-trained research personnel as University Research Associates (URAs). URAs are considered employees of SFU.

responsibilities on principal investigators can be onerous. Moreover, such practices may expose both principal investigators and the institution to unnecessary risk.

The institution is thus undertaking a review on the topic of policies and practices related to employment of research personnel. This report provides details on the approach, the research, and the findings. It also proposes considerations for a future direction that SFU might take.

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2. Approach

The project to review employment practices related to personnel funded from research income began in 2017 as an internal initiative to research legislation and examine data produced from the payroll system, the Student Information Management System (SIMS) and the Human Capital Management system (HAP).

In January 2018, SFU engaged Sierra Systems to facilitate a more comprehensive review at the request of Associate VP of Human Resources, Sandi de Domenico and Associate VP of Research, Dugan O'Neil. The purpose of this review was to identify common practices across SFU (and issues raised therefrom), to compare these with practices at peer institutions, and to identify considerations for improving SFU's practices for the benefit of research personnel, principal investigators and the institution.

The engagement involved three streams of inquiry:

1. Internal information gathering:

Approximately 37 documents were reviewed ([Appendix D](#)), including previous reports, informational webpages, forms, and sample materials/templates. Semi-structured interviews following an interview guide ([Appendix C](#)) with 19 faculty, staff and postdoctoral fellows (Participant List [Appendix B](#))

2. External information gathering

Online research into employment policies and practices in peer institutions: 13 institutions were selected, including nine U15 members and 5 BC/Alberta universities. Results are summarized in a table as [Appendix E](#).

A review of government regulation, funder policy and SFU policy ([Section 3: Regulatory & Policy Framework](#))

3. Data analysis

Analysis to classify a 3,245-line data extract produced by IT Services on the October 28, 2017 pay run. A data summary is included as [Appendix A](#).

Figures provided by SFU's Benefits department with respect to enrolments and estimated costs.

This report consolidates this research and analysis into current state findings and proposed future state considerations. Where possible, hyperlinks in the body, tables and citations aim to assist the reader in navigating to original sources for additional detail. It is worth noting with appreciation that all participants were quick to accept meeting invites, were prepared and forthcoming during interviews and were thorough in providing requested follow-up information. This diligence and openness contributed immensely to the quality of this document.

3. Regulatory & Policy Framework

The obligations, responsibilities and constraints of the employment relationship with research personnel are governed by Federal and Provincial laws, regulations and agency policies, as well as funder and SFU policies and contract terms. Public bodies are generally governed by the Constitution Act, and institutions in BC are generally governed by the University Act. Below, legislation, regulation and policy that more directly governs the employment relationship are discussed.

In general, there is little in federal or provincial legislation that is specific to research personnel in universities, other than the treatment of scholarship awards for taxation purposes. Future state considerations must continue to observe external legislation and regulation, seek to influence funder policy where necessary and focus on changes to internal policies and procedures.

An important consideration is that of employer-employee relationship: first, whether employment exists (versus a training or independent contractor relationship), and second, who the employer is (principal investigator or SFU). This relationship has implications on the application of, and obligations under, the various legislation laid out below. Federal guidance (RC4110(E) Rev.17 and ESDC IPG-069, below) sets out the criteria and tests for the employer-employee relationship. It should be noted that interview feedback points to substance over form: it is probable that SFU would be considered employer of grant-funded research personnel, and should there be an investigation or ruling, that outcome would supersede SFU policy.

3.1 Federal Legislation, Regulation and Common Law

- **Income Tax Act**: Sets of the criteria that define an employment relationship and sets out the federal income tax deductions required from each employee and employer to be remitted to the Canada Revenue Agency. Employment income is reported on a T4 form, and SFU deducts income tax, CPP and EI contributions through payroll. Scholarship income is reported on a T4A form, and SFU does not deduct income tax, CPP or EI contributions from this income. Scholarship income is tax-exempted for full-time qualifying students (see [guidance](#)).
- **Canada Pension Plan**: Sets out the contributions required from each employee and employer to the Canada Pension Plan. (split evenly; if there is no employment relationship, then income recipient is responsible for entire amount if the income is derived from employment) SFU payroll deducts these contributions from employment income as employer or on behalf of the PI employment. For research personnel whose income is not administered through SFU payroll, these contributions are not deducted.
- **Employment Insurance Act**: Sets out the contributions required from each employee and employer to employment insurance premiums. This only applies if income is earned from employment. SFU payroll deducts these contributions from employment income as employer or on behalf of the PI employment. For research personnel whose income is not administered through SFU payroll, these contributions are not deducted.
- **Interpretation guidance provided under the authority of the Canada Revenue Agency Act**: Sets out the criteria that define an employment relationship ([RC4110\(E\) Rev.17](#)).
- **Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada policy**: Defines requirements for employment of foreign nationals. On immigration forms ([IMM5985](#)), the agency requires identification of an employer and National Occupation Code ([NOC 2016](#))
- **Determining the Employer/Employee Relationship** (Employment and Social Development Canada [IPG-069](#)): The purpose of the IPG is to ensure a uniform national application to determine the

existence of an employer/employee relationship, which is based on the total relationship that exists between the parties utilizing the various criteria set by the courts.

3.2 Provincial Legislation & Regulation

- **BC Employment Standards Act**: governs responsibilities of the employer. Key areas include statutory minimums for salary, hours of work, leaves of absence, and termination.
- **BC Income Tax Act**: Sets out the provincial income tax deductions required from each employee and employer; to be remitted to the Canada Revenue Agency.
- **Worker's Compensation Act**: Sets out scope of compensable claims and responsibilities of employers, supervisors and workers for contributing to a safe workplace and for reporting injuries. WorkSafeBC requires compliance with their bullying and harassment policy. It is SFU's understanding that WorkSafeBC recognizes research personnel as employees of the institution.
- **BC Human Rights Act and Code**: Provides for safeguards and an adjudication mechanism against harassment and discrimination.

3.3 Funder Policy

- **Tri-council Financial Administration Guide** (hosted on NSERC): This guidance neither mandates nor excludes any forms of employment relationship. It does, however, restrict use of grant funds to only non-discretionary benefits: statutory benefits and those deemed non-discretionary in University policy.⁴ It provides examples of what the Tri-council considers non-discretionary benefits. A number of these examples are in fact considered discretionary in SFU policy, and thus are ineligible expenses from grant funds.
- **Additional funder policies** (MITACS, Genome Canada): Often Canadian funder policy will reflect that of Tri-council.
- **Research funder contracts** – Terms and conditions set out in specific funder contracts may govern employment relationship and use of funds. Research contracts were not examined within the scope of this review.

3.4 SFU Policy

- **SFU Research Policy R50.01 University Research Associates**: This 1992 policy was created to recognize a category of long-term research personnel, where funding is available for two or more years. University Research Associates are employees of SFU and not of the grant holder, though the grant holder remains the supervisor.

⁴ Non-discretionary benefits are mandatory minimum benefits mandated by legislation and those mandated by institutional policy to be above the legislated minimums. The tri-council provides the following guidance with respect to institutional non-discretionary benefits: "Institutional non-discretionary benefits normally include long- and short-term disability insurance; life insurance; pension benefits; medical, vision and dental care benefits; and parental leave. The tri-council also provides the following guidance for non-eligible expenses "discretionary severance and separation packages". Source: www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/FinancialAdminGuide-GuideAdminFinancier/FundsUse-UtilisationSubventions_eng.asp

- **SFU Research Policy R50.02** Employment of Personnel Funded from Research: This 1992 policy states, in Section 4.5, that “personnel whose income is derived from grant funds remain employees of the grant holder and not the University” and, in Section 4.4, that “The University has no commitment to a grant employee beyond the assistance it provides grant holders with the receipt and disbursement of grant funds.” The assistance that SFU provides with respect to research personnel is limited to payroll administration.
- **SFU Research Policy R50.03** Postdoctoral Fellows: This 2000 policy differentiates between ‘External PDFs and ‘Grant PDFs’. External PDFs receive stipends either directly from an external agency, or through SFU from funds that are provided to SFU for administration on behalf of that agency. The policy is silent on employment relationship, but Section 3.3 does state that “External PDFs are not eligible to receive employment benefits from SFU.” It is interpreted that there is no employment relationship for External PDFs.

‘Grant PDFs’ receive compensation from research grants or contracts, and who are considered to be employees of the grant holder rather than of SFU.
- **SFU Research Policy R50.04** University Research Assistant: This 2013 policy was created to recognize a category of long-term research personnel, where funding is available for two or more years. University Research Assistants are employees of SFU and not of the grant holder, though the grant holder remains the supervisor.
- **Other SFU policies** related to research safety, ethics, human rights and financial administration must also be observed by research personnel and employer

Because of how these SFU policies have emerged over decades, interpretation is ambiguous. Each policy document is structured differently—there is no common set of sections that they all address. When other policies are silent on a matter, it is unclear whether R50.02 governs as a de facto policy covering all personnel funded from research.

4. Current Treatment of Research Personnel at SFU

The following table serves to summarize the similarities and differences among the classes of research personnel at SFU. This has been populated through policy review, interview information, data analysis and online research of SFU HR website.

Criteria	University Research Associate	Research Personnel	Postdoctoral Fellows		University Research Assistant
			Grant	External	
SFU Policy	R 50.01	R 50.02	R 50.03	R 50.03	R 50.04
Title(s)	University Research Associate	Student research assistant (undergrad, grad) Research Assistant (full-time) Research Technician Research Manager Research Associate Senior Research Associate Research Manager	Postdoctoral Fellows		University Research Assistant
Data (% of 1,657 research personnel identified)	26 (from Faculty Relations) (1.6%)	1,529 TOTAL 617 Grad student scholarship* (37.2%) 3 National scholarship* 824 Research Assistant (49.7%) 85 Other (5.1%)	110 Postdoctoral Fellows *may include some from the scholarships categories (6.6%)		8 (0.5%)
Employer (according to SFU policy)	Silent (SFU)	Faculty Member	Silent (Faculty Member)	Silent (income not derived from employment)	SFU
Supervisor	Faculty Member	Faculty Member	Faculty Member	Faculty Member	Faculty Member
Hiring	Faculty Relations facilitated	Led by Faculty Member; Department Administrator may assist	Led by Faculty Member; Department Administrator may assist	Led by Faculty Member; Department Administrator may assist	Led by Faculty Member; Department Administrator may assist
Appointment	URA Appointment Form	Payroll Appointment Form (PAF)	Payroll Appointment Form (PAF)	Payroll Appointment Form (PAF)	Payroll Appointment Form (PAF)

Criteria	University Research Associate	Research Personnel	Postdoctoral Fellows		University Research Assistant
			Grant	External	
SFU Policy	R 50.01	R 50.02	R 50.03	R 50.03	R 50.04
Salary	Salary Negotiated – facilitated by Faculty Relations	Amount varies. May be salary or stipend; Negotiated with Faculty Member	Amount varies, generally between \$40-60k/annum. Negotiated with Faculty Member; policy provides for NSERC minimum*	Awarded by Funder and subject to funder constraints	Negotiated with Faculty Member
Payment	Payroll	Payroll	Payroll	Payroll or N/A if not SFU administered	Payroll
Benefits Provided	Yes – faculty plan 100% SFU paid	Case-by-case (largely no); based on funder constraints	Case-by-case (largely no); based on funder constraints	No	Yes, RA plan 50% SFU paid
Benefits Plan	Faculty Plan (no professional development, technology subsidy or sabbatical)	Case-by-case: RA Plan if eligible	Case-by-case: RA Plan if eligible	Not eligible	RA Plan eligible 50% employer paid
MSP	100% Employer-paid	Case-by-case	Case-by-case	No	50% Employer-paid
Relocation	Yes, as per SFU policy	Case-by-case	Up to one-way economy fare	No	Silent
Vacation	One month	Case-by-case; statutory minimum (10 days)	Case-by-case; statutory minimum (10 days)	Case-by-case; not governed by employment legislation	20 days
Maternity/ Parental Leave	Faculty Plan *unclear from policy whether SFU funds or grant funds cover	Negotiated; Tri-council minimum or statutory minimum; from grant funds	Negotiated; Tri-council policy or statutory minimum; from grant funds	May be either Tri-council policy or statutory minimum; from grant funds	RA Plan
Termination Severance	Term end-date or notice; University practice	Term end-date or notice; ESA minimum	Term end-date or notice; ESA minimum	Term end-date or notice; ESA minimum	Term end-date or notice; University practice
Community events	SFU	No standard; may be included in department events	Postdoctoral Association	Postdoctoral Association	SFU

5. Summary of Findings

Issues raised in internal interviews with 19 participants is summarized as it applies to the different stakeholders: research personnel, principal investigators, departments/research centres/faculties, and institutional-level issues.

5.1 Research Personnel Issues Raised

- Limited or non-existent benefits eligibility
 - Where exists, plan is less favourable than staff/faculty plans
- Lack of job stability with year-to-year appointments
- Lack of recognition and participation as full members of SFU community
 - May not receive all emails
 - Unable to attend SFU community events
 - May not be recognized for contributions (service awards)
- Lack of support (harassment resolution, counselling services)
- Inequity in compensation packages for similar work
- Rights and norms not fully understood
- Perception of risk exposure (coverage for workplace incidents)
- Potential immigration issues when SFU is indicated as employer

5.2 Principal Investigators Issues Raised

- Responsibility for HR administrative procedures
 - May lack information; often ask colleagues or repeat practices from decades ago
 - Assistance with posting and recruiting for research support roles
 - Lack of visibility into equitable practices
- Assumes risk associated with employer obligations (BC Employment Standards Act) in addition to the obligations of the supervisor
- Inability to provide discretionary benefits due to SFU policy
 - Tri-Council guidance includes extended health and dental as examples of 'non-discretionary' benefits
- Would like as much of the grant funding as possible to go towards direct research
 - Support for benefits; multiple mentions of current practice to top-up
- Would like to retain control and flexibility currently afforded
 - Hiring decisions
 - Salary/benefits provisions
 - Direction of day-to-day
 - Concern of more processes, constraints on salary ranges, requirements for benefits when personnel may prefer top up
- Use of volunteers has raised concerns of required payment for services in the past

5.3 Department/Research Centre/Faculty Issues Raised

- Administrative burden: lack of clarity on processes/forms
- Lack of visibility on equitable practices
 - Especially for cross-disciplinary centres that hire personnel from different discipline backgrounds to do similar work
 - For departments that rarely hire research personnel

5.4 Institution-level Issues Raised

- Risk of not providing appropriate compensation, benefits package, and supportive environment to attract and retain top caliber research personnel and research faculty
- Risk of employment relationship in substance even if not in form (SFU will have ESA obligations)
- Risk of conflicting information to immigration officials
- Risk of incumbent research personnel performing union/association job tasks
- General reputational risk weighed against increased cost of benefits and increased operational support costs

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6. Options Assessment

At the outset of the engagement, the Sponsors articulated a set of four possible future state options. The order below reflects increasing change impact and increasing commitment required from SFU:

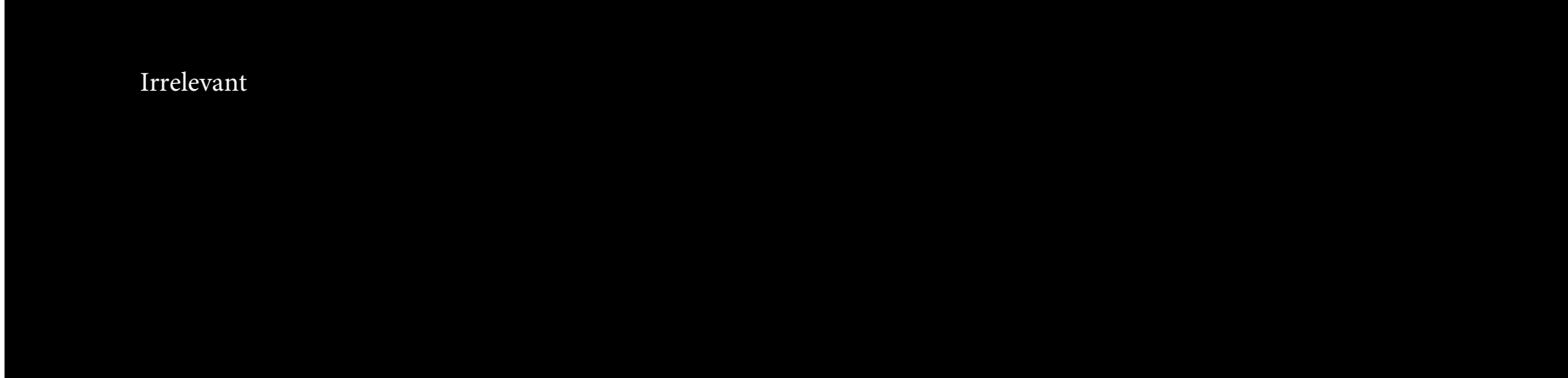
1. **Status Quo:** Maintain current classifications, R50 policies, benefits provisions and general research personnel employment practices
2. **Provide Education and Training:** Support research personnel and principal investigators by clarifying elements of policy and procedure and providing communications and training opportunities to increase knowledge of rights and obligations for all parties.
3. **Change policies:** Recognize classes of research personnel as employees of SFU and clarify classes so that all research personnel can clearly understand which class they belong to and what rights and benefits they have. In conjunction with change to policies, modernize the employment practices to reflect the needs of the research community moving forward (for example, the need for benefits).
4. **Change policies to recognize classes of research personnel as employees of SFU and assist classes with affiliations.**

Early in the engagement, it was agreed that these four options might not be mutually exclusive. In other words, for different classes of research personnel or different faculties, SFU may employ different options. Similarly, as SFU moves towards a target future state, it may transition from one option to another over time.

The table on the next pages provides a high-level description of impact and cost/benefit summary for each

SFU Research Personnel Employment Practices Review	OPTIONS ANALYSIS			
	1	2	3	4
	Status Quo: Maintain R50 policies	Education and Training	Change Policy to recognize employment relationship	Recognize as employee with affiliation
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,639 (of 1,657) research personnel not currently employees of SFU Approximately 50-75 personnel enrolled in benefits (all R50.01) PIs remain responsible for any employer obligations and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Webpages with guidance and resources for prospective and current personnel, as well as supervisors. Research, advice and guidance regarding compensation packages (may be required for grant budget proposals) and hiring processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codify SFU as employer – provide associated benefits and support in line with those provided to other employment groups and their supervisors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codify SFU as employer and support formation of a research employee group or identify existing group that may represent research staff. Provide associated benefits and support in line with those provided to other employment groups and their supervisors.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders have adapted and are familiar with processes Provides flexibility to PI around salary, benefits and management of employees Greater portion of grant funds to be used towards research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater visibility into rights and obligations for all parties Clarity on roles and responsibilities will minimize risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses participant needs for reduction of personal risk exposure, benefits and job stability. Aligns SFU practices with those at a majority of peer institutions, where research roles are employees of the institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses participant needs for reduction of personal risk exposure, benefits and job stability. Aligns SFU practices with those at a large minority of peer institutions, where research roles are affiliated.
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See separate issues in Section 6 of this report for issues related to each stakeholder group Workarounds and potential 'gray market' for benefits (top ups and individual plans) reduce reliability of the current processes 	<p>Does not address several participant needs, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce personal risk exposure Reduce administrative burden Provide benefits Provide stability <p>Will create visibility into, and reinforce, the dated practices at SFU.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risks to researchers and reputational and regulatory (immigration) risk remain at the institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May potentially reduce flexibility Perceived loss of PI autonomy/control Compared with Options 1 and 2, there will be greater overhead costs. Smaller portion of grant funds to be used towards research. If student researchers are included, it is possible that current award income (reported on T4A) becomes taxable income. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May reduce flexibility and responsiveness of the hiring process – may increase administrative burden Perceived loss of PI autonomy/control If student researchers are included, it is possible that current award income (reported on T4A) becomes taxable income. Compared to Option 3, there will be greater overhead costs in creating formal job descriptions, maintaining salary research, liaising with the group representative(s). There may be an expectation of increased compensation packages.

SFU Research Personnel Employment Practices Review	OPTIONS ANALYSIS			
	1	2	3	4
	Status Quo: Maintain R50 policies	Education and Training	Change Policy to recognize employment relationship	Recognize as employee with affiliation
SFU Research Personnel Employment Practices Review	OPTIONS ANALYSIS (continued)			
	1	2	3	4
	Status Quo: Maintain R50 policies	Education and Training	Change Policy to recognize employment relationship	Recognize as employee with affiliation



Irrelevant

Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain agreement at VP Table Release review findings to participants Consider future review date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain agreement at VP Table Involve PI and admin representatives from all faculties in designing resources – scope and target stakeholder groups based on identified priority Define processes for maintaining and disseminating information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain agreement at VP Table Perform broader consultation with RAs, faculty and HR Identify detailed costing and implementation options – including scope and transition options Identify new processes, roles and/or responsibilities Develop implementation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain agreement at VP Table Perform broader consultation with RAs, faculty, HR and SFUFA Identify costing and implementation options – including scope and transition options Identify new processes, roles and/or responsibilities Develop implementation plan
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7. Proposed Future Considerations

7.1 Guiding Principles

To address the common themes in the issues identified, the following serve to guide the design of improvements to practices that affect research personnel.

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 (see SFU's [sustainability vision and goals](#))

7.2 Future Considerations Summary

The nine following considerations serve to operationalize the guiding principles above. Each is discussed in greater detail in Section 7.3.

Consideration (details in section 7.3)	Guiding Principle Supported				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Designate the University as employer for additional classes of research personnel (up to 1,100 additional staff)	✓	✓	✓		✓
2. Rewrite R50 policies from the ground up to reflect agreed upon classifications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Support creation of a professional research staff employee group	✓	✓		✓	✓
4. Provide salary range guidance to Principal Investigators				✓	✓
5. Make benefits in line with the 'median' of peers non-discretionary to permit use of Tri-Council grant funds	✓	✓			✓
6. Educate stakeholders by creating and maintaining resource webpages			✓	✓	✓
7. Provide institutional assistance with administration			✓		✓
8. Update the Payroll Appointment Form (in alignment with policies) to minimize data quality issues				✓	✓
9. Consider a phased transition plan	✓			✓	✓

7.3 Future Considerations Discussion

1. Designate the University as employer for additional classes of research personnel.

Discussion: Currently, the majority of the 1,673 research personnel identified are not considered employees of the institution. This represents ~25% of SFU's faculty and staff community. This treatment is out of line with many peer institutions and has been raised as a common issue in all internal participant interviews. In fact, external agencies such as WorkSafe BC and the Canada Revenue Agency look to the substance of the work rather than contracts and policies. Interviewees raised the fact that in substance, SFU is the employer.

The additional classes should include all those currently classified as employees of a PI. This includes "research assistants" (909 individuals) and "postdoctoral fellows" (110 Grant PDFs). Where a PDF receives external funding and an employment relationship may not be practical, equivalent treatment should be provided. The University may consider treatment of current "Trainees" (620 scholarship recipients) and other non-affiliated term workers (600 "other") that may be involved in research.

Designating the University, rather than PI, as employer will serve to provide institutional recognition for services (eligibility for service awards) and to align risk exposure inherent in an employment relationship. It will also provide access to certain services available to employees of SFU.

The concerns raised include (1) increased administrative burden where the university is involved in defining jobs and performing hiring, (2) loss of PI control, (3) increase in costs where the employer designation provides for additional services and benefits.

2. Rewrite R50 policies from the ground up to reflect agreed upon classifications

Discussion: The four R50 research personnel policies have been written at different points in time, and R50.02, which may govern 900-1,500 personnel, was written 25 years ago, where SFU's research enterprise was much smaller. The four policies have different structures, and it is unclear how they relate to each other.

SFU should consider a 'ground up' rewrite of policies governing research personnel to reflect the classifications agreed upon. Policies should clearly articulate which classes they address, and they should be mutually exclusive. Policies should use the same structure and headings to allow easy comparison. Policies should include provisions for transition from one class to another.

Specific issues that policies can address include the employment relationship, broader recognition of long-term service and inclusion of additional benefits as non-discretionary to allow coverage through grant funds.

The rewrite of R50 policies will provide the clarity that many interview participants sought and reflect an up-to-date view of the needs of the research enterprise and recognition deserved among the research community. This is also a foundational consideration that enables additional supports discussed below.

3. Support creation of a professional research staff employee group

Discussion: Anecdotes from interview participants revealed that a number of research personnel are career professionals and are valuable to SFU's research enterprise. However, because of the short-term nature of funding and the PI employer, job stability and professional development opportunities are limited or, more often, non-existent.

A number of institutions are moving towards recognizing professional research staff. For example, UBC has an employee group for non-affiliated technicians and research assistants with job roles and a handbook. SFU should consider assisting the formation of such a group and similar set of resources (see consideration #6) as well as policies to increase job stability, professional development and service recognition.

4. Provide salary range guidance to Principal Investigators

Discussion: When asked about how research personnel salaries were determined, participants demonstrated different levels of understanding and different levels of confidence. Some departments hire a greater number of research personnel and therefore have a greater base of comparison. Some principal investigators reached out to peers. Some salaries were determined by funders. That said, there is evidence of a large range in research personnel salaries – anecdotes from minimum wage through to remuneration expected by fully-trained professionals.

To create visibility and equity among research personnel, SFU's HR advisors might provide and maintain suggested salary ranges for different roles, developed in partnership with department administrators. UBC, for example, provides for job descriptions and salary charts for research staff.

To promote social sustainability, SFU may further require salaries to be approved if below range, but not if above range. In the past, the Tri-Council listed salary minimums for grant-funded employees, but this guidance is no longer provided.

It is important to recognize that a balance must be struck between promoting social sustainability and equity, with the realities of different disciplines and grant funding. This consideration does not advocate a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to salary equity.

5. Make benefits in line with the 'median' of peers non-discretionary to permit use of Tri-Council grant funds

Discussion: Currently, the majority of research personnel at SFU are not eligible to participate in institutional benefit plans. Even where they have access to university services (health and counselling), interview participants often seemed unclear and held the perception that because they were neither students nor staff, they were ineligible. Some principal investigators have provided salary top ups in lieu of benefits, and others have arranged for separate group benefits outside of SFU, though constraints of SFU and funder policy remain.

Peer research identified that of the research employees at other institutions, 71% were eligible for benefits, though the range of benefits offered was extremely broad, as was employer-employee cost sharing. The tri-council's financial administration guide even includes extended

health, dental and leave as examples of non-discretionary benefits that grant funds may be used to fund. At SFU, however, such expenses are discretionary and therefore cannot be funded from grant funds.

SFU's policies and provision of benefits are well below those of the median institutions. Only a small number of the 1,673 research personnel participate in the RA benefits plan (between 35-47, depending on the benefit). SFU should consider steps to increase these numbers by increasing the non-discretionary benefits in policy, and to provide benefits plans in line with the 'median' packages offered at peers, which will require further research.

This consideration will reduce risk to all parties: proactive attention to wellness from research personnel may provide for less absenteeism and greater productivity to the principal investigator and greater output to the institution. Benefits may promote a longer-term career outlook and reduce turnover of research personnel.

In line with the reduction in risk, additional benefits will impose significant cost to the institution. A careful transition plan and bridge funding can ease the shift. It should be noted that none of the principal investigators interviewed were against providing benefits to research personnel, even when costs were factored into the discussion.

6. Educate stakeholders by creating and maintaining resource webpages

Discussion: Interview participants mentioned repeatedly that information is not readily available, and that interpretation of information is unclear. SFU should consider a number of webpages to cater to specific groups:

- a. "*Prospective* research staff" webpage
- b. "*Current* Research Staff" webpage (see #3)
- c. "Research staff supervisor" webpage

7. Provide institutional assistance with administration

Discussion: Principal Investigator and Department Administrator participants mentioned the administrative burden associated with hiring and managing research personnel. A few mentioned feeling that they were their 'own HR departments'. At the same time, Principal Investigators recognized the potentially slower process if such responsibilities were centralized.

SFU should consider providing guidance through research, advice, and templates to assist the administrative burden put on principal investigators. SFU may also consider offering additional administrative support within departments that hire and manage a large number of research personnel.

Support may include template job descriptions, template compensation packages (and ranges) and template employment letters for common roles (it should be noted that employment letters are already currently available). Support may also include guidance through processes and ongoing monitoring of term contract renewals so that nothing 'falls through the cracks' (anecdotes of research personnel not being paid or being required to undergo a second waiting period for benefits). Support may also include general HR-related guidance, such as on managing staff and on safety or harassment issues.

8. Update the Payroll Appointment Form (in alignment with policies) to minimize data quality issues

Discussion: The Payroll Appointment Form (PAF) is used to pay all non-affiliated temporary workers – both research and non-research personnel. Its use has expanded over time and additional categories have been added, which has caused confusion to managers filling in the form and to those interpreting the system data.

Key updates to the PAF should include the following:

- a. Group all research categories and separate from non-research categories
- b. Provide brief descriptions/explanations on the form (rather than in separate document)
- c. Provide a classification navigation checklist (funding recipient is a student, funding recipient is working on own project, funding recipient is contributing to lab-directed project) to clarify/justify choice of classification
- d. Additional updates to reflect implementation of considerations raised in this report

9. Consider a phased transition plan

Discussion: Interview participants agreed on high level outcomes with respect to employment relationships and benefits, and generally agreed on degree and direction. When asked about critical success factors for such a transformation, many participants raised concerns about implementation.

Specifically, many questioned SFU's ability to achieve outcomes in line with the guiding principles across thousands of stakeholders and with limited funds. There are many levers that SFU can use to ease into the future state. Suggestions to navigate towards the desired outcome often include some combination the following incremental transition paths:

- a. Some classes included → all classes (begin with PDFs and long-term RAs)
- b. Centrally-funded → grant funded (consider requiring 2020 grant budget proposals to meet new policies but grandfathering current)
- c. Limited benefits → increase in benefits over time (begin with most valued benefits as determined by HR Benefits team)
- d. Explore contributions to an "extraordinary expense fund" to be used for ineligible expenses and large expenses that may significantly affect a project (UBC contribution rate is 0.5% of research funding)

Appendices

A. RA Personnel Statistics

An internal report prepared in February 2017 was reviewed during the internal information gathering activities. The analysis in this report was performed on a January 2017 data extract, but was based on number of *payments* rather than number of *personnel*.

Using a similar approach, but focusing on number of personnel, analysis was performed on an IT Services data extract identifying all payments to employees (on the October 28, 2017 pay run) with positions assigned to the 700 and 800 job codes. Additional data was provided by Faculty Relations.

The extract had 3,245 payments that were made to 2,260 unique personnel. (through employee ID de-duplication) Breakdown of personnel is as follows:

Research personnel positions	Count	Non-research personnel positions	Count
Grad Student Scholarship	617	Enhanced Pension	19
National Scholarship	3	Other, non-continuing staff	407
Post-doctoral Fellow	110	Program-Coordinator/Fac Associate	12
Research Assistant	824	Recreation Services Staff	114
University Research Assistant - LT	8	Sessional Lecturer 1	3
Other, non-continuing (Fund N, R, X)	78	Sessional Lecturer 2	27
Other, non-continuing (Description: RA)	7		
University Research Associate (not on extract – figure from Faculty Relations)	26		
TOTAL RESEARCH	~1,673	TOTAL NON-RESEARCH	~582
TOTAL UNKNOWN*	~30		

*Unknown = "Other, non-continuing" positions also described as "Other, non-continuing" and not paid through research funds (N, R, X).

According to this analysis, there are 1,673 research personnel at SFU. This figure may be increased by:

- The ~30 labelled as unknown above.
- Externally paid Post-doctoral Fellows who receive funds directly from a funder, without administration by SFU. The Office of Graduate Students and Post-doctoral Fellows has raised this possibility and does not track all such personnel.
- Research personnel not paid through SFU payroll (anecdotal evidence of this possibility).

There are minor limitation to this estimated figure:

- It is a point in time that should be validated for consistency with a few more extracts

- Counts may include a small number of duplicates (estimated at <2% of total 3,245 figure)

What the analysis does not identify:

- Which student scholarship recipients may be performing employment-related tasks rather than trainee-related tasks.
- How many of the above numbers are part-time versus full-time personnel
- How many of the above numbers are long-term personnel.
- The number of research personnel paid through honoraria or contracts

These are considerations necessary to more accurately cost a proposed future direction.

Additional data accuracy issues were uncovered that may require further analysis and/or updates to system data and control processes:

- Google search by name shows PDFs and research managers categorized as Research Assistants on PAF.
- Brar, Rajveer coded under Recreation Services staff
- Research Assistant secondary descriptions appear to include non-research roles (for example, Writing Facilitator, APSA Association Director, Education Consultant, Tutor) and roles that are may not be research-oriented (for example, Admin Assistant, Events Coordinator, CUPE's office employee). This may inflate the number of research personnel.

Irrelevant

B. List of Participants

At the direction of project sponsors Sandi de Domenico, AVP Human Resources and Dr. Dugan O’Neil, AVP Research, 16 interviews involving 19 SFU participants were conducted in January and February 2018. Participants were chosen to represent a cross-section of roles related to research personnel at SFU. This included:

- 5 Faculty Supervisors (Science, Health Sciences, Arts)
- 3 Postdoctoral Fellows
- 3 representatives of the Graduate Student Society
- 3 Department/Faculty Administrators (Big Data, Physics, Health Sciences)
- 8 Central Administrators (HR, Benefits, Risk, Faculty Relations, Payroll and Research Accounting)

Scheduled for 60 minutes, interviews ranged from approximately 30 to over 90 minutes in length. Most participants were provided with an interview guide (Appendix C) or specific questions of interest ahead of the scheduled interview. Themes and anecdotes identified during these interviews contributed to the findings and recommendations made in this report.

It should be noted that on many occasions, participants consulted with colleagues and staff produced in preparation for an interview, which was both valuable and appreciated. On a few occasions, written notes were provided in preparation.

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

*GSS interview conducted by Sandi de Domenico and Dugan O’Neil

C. Participant Interview Guide

The following document was circulated via email to first round interview participants ahead of the interviews (other than GSS representatives). Questions were modified for a subset of participants to address areas of specific knowledge.

Simon Fraser University Individual being Interviewed Interview Guide Interview scheduling information (date, time, conference call info)			
SFU Office of the VP Research & SFU Human Resources			
AGENDA			
Overview of the Initiative	<p>SFU HR and the Office of the VP Research are partnering to conduct a review of the hiring and employment of research assistants, research associates and post-doctoral fellows. The review will include legislation, policies, processes and classifications, and will look at practices across SFU as compared to those in peer institutions.</p> <p>SFU has retained an external consultant, Alasdair Maughan from Sierra Systems, to facilitate the review and develop a report summarizing findings and recommendations.</p>		
Purpose	<p>We expect to interview between ten and 20 stakeholders over the new few months. These interviews, along with document review and online research, will contribute to the findings and recommendations report.</p>		
Roles and Expectations	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p>Interviewee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward data, processes, issues, opportunities, lessons learned, and any other insights • Openly share knowledge of practices at peer institutions • NOTE: To promote open discussion, comments will not be attributed to specific individuals. Notes from individual interviews will not be shared. Interviewee names and roles will appear on a list of 'individuals consulted'. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p>Sierra:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and document interview discussions and ensure key points are confirmed • Accurately report stakeholder input in aggregate to sponsors in a "What We Heard" report. </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Interviewee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward data, processes, issues, opportunities, lessons learned, and any other insights • Openly share knowledge of practices at peer institutions • NOTE: To promote open discussion, comments will not be attributed to specific individuals. Notes from individual interviews will not be shared. Interviewee names and roles will appear on a list of 'individuals consulted'. 	<p>Sierra:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and document interview discussions and ensure key points are confirmed • Accurately report stakeholder input in aggregate to sponsors in a "What We Heard" report.
<p>Interviewee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring forward data, processes, issues, opportunities, lessons learned, and any other insights • Openly share knowledge of practices at peer institutions • NOTE: To promote open discussion, comments will not be attributed to specific individuals. Notes from individual interviews will not be shared. Interviewee names and roles will appear on a list of 'individuals consulted'. 	<p>Sierra:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and document interview discussions and ensure key points are confirmed • Accurately report stakeholder input in aggregate to sponsors in a "What We Heard" report. 		
Interview Topics and Guiding Questions	<p>The following topics and questions are meant as a guide to the interview. They are not meant to limit the discussion. Some questions may not apply in each interview. Do feel free to raise any additional considerations that may be relevant.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS & CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH PERSONNEL <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What types of research personnel do you hire? b. How are they funded? c. What are the employment relationships (employee/independent contractor; supervisor/SFU as employer?) d. What is your role and responsibility vis a vis these personnel? e. How do you determine what class to use? f. Commentary on/validation of data/sources g. How are classes treated at peer institutions? h. What is your perspective on different employment relationships? 2. HIRING PROCESSES <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you follow different hiring processes for different classes of research personnel? b. Who 'owns' the procedures? How are you made aware of the steps/requirements/changes? 		

Simon Fraser University

Individual being Interviewed

Interview Guide

Interview scheduling information (date, time, conference call info)

	<p>c. Can you walk me through the hiring process(es)? And the contract renewal/extension process, if different? I'm interested in documents produced and people you interact with to complete hiring. Comments on issues or opportunities related to the hiring process?</p> <p>d. What support does SFU provide throughout this process? What support <i>should</i> SFU provide, in your opinion?</p> <p>e. Are there differences in peer institution hiring practices? If so, please elaborate.</p> <p>3. EMPLOYMENT TERMS</p> <p>a. How is the employment contract approached? Standard or case-by-case?</p> <p>b. What detail is discussed/negotiated? Specifically, what are the expectations for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Job description ii. Salary (how is it determined - directed by policy, or negotiated?) iii. MSP iv. Extended health benefits v. Vacation entitlement vi. Other benefits/payments, such as transportation costs etc. <p>c. Do research personnel perform tasks beyond those articulated in the job description? If so, is that an expectation at SFU?</p> <p>4. GOVERNING LEGISLATION AND POLICY</p> <p>a. Legislation: Do you have any comments on federal or provincial legislation that governs the employment relationship with research assistants, research associates and/or post-doctoral fellows?</p> <p>b. SFU policies: Are research policies R 50.01, R 50.02, R 50.03 consulted/followed?</p> <p>c. Funder policies: Can you share any information with respect to granting agency policies – are they consulted? Who is responsible for ensuring that they are followed?</p> <p>d. Is there anything you'd like to see clarified in SFU or granting agency policy?</p> <p>5. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS</p> <p>a. Issues/risks with the current approach(es)? What concerns you?</p> <p>b. Benefits from the current approach(es)? What is working well?</p> <p>c. Opportunities and options moving forward? Where might we go?</p>
<p>Follow-up Requirements</p>	<p>Permission to follow up? Additional information to be provided in future?</p>
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes will be circulated in draft to interviewee for validation • Notes from all interviews will be aggregated into findings in a What We Heard report • Draft report to be circulated to sponsors in early-March • Additional consultation may follow

D. Information Sources

Item/Title	Source	Notes
Research Grant Ees at UBC	Judith Osborne (hard copy); compiled by Janine Lauer, Director, SFU HR Advisory Services in 2007	History of Research Personnel employment relationship at UBC. Rationale: Liability (WCB, Safety), Benefits. Nonunion technician handbook. Institutional liability: severance payments where grants fail. Mitigated with Extraordinary Expense Fund. (Contribution rate of <0.1% of grant in 2007)
Guard.me @ SFU information pamphlet	Paper brochure from HR	Short-term medical insurance for international & exchange students that covers MSP and other benefits (prescription drugs, psychotherapy, non-emergency care)a
GSS graduate benefit plan information pamphlet	Paper brochure from HR/ www.ihaveaplan.ca	Coverage for graduate students – partial coverage for prescriptions, paramedical therapy
Document “General Presentation” on grant-funded employees & benefits	Hard copy received from Sandi de Domenico; attributed to Simon Fraser Student Society	Review of classifications of research personnel
Document “Project: Research Assistants” draft October 2017 reviewing applicable legislation	Hard copy received from Sandi de Domenico; authored by Monica Swanson	Review of application legislation governing employment relationships and responsibilities
Document “Postdoctoral Fellows in Canada: Situations and Actions” October 2017	Available on Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Fellows website: www.caps-acsp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Postdoctoral-Fellows-in-Canada-Situations-and-Actions.pdf	Online scan of treatment of Postdoctoral Fellows at institutions across Canada
Document: “Recommendations to Improve Employment Conditions for Postdoctoral Fellows at SFU”	PDF Provided by Jessica Walsh, VP External Communications of the Simon Fraser University Postdoctoral Association, February 1, 2018	
SFU Policy A 10.01 “Academic Appointments”	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/academic_policies/10_series/A10-01.pdf	University Research Associates R50.01 policy references Category C of A10.01 for Dean-concluded hiring process of University Research Associates.
SFU Policy R 50.01 “University Research Associates”	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/R50-01.pdf	Governs the creation of University Research Associateships. Silent on applicability of R 50.02 “Employment of Personnel Funded from Research”

		to University Research Associates under R 50.01
Document “Recommendation for Appointment – University Research Associate”	https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/faculty-relations/academic-administrators/Appt.Form.Clinical.doc	For approval by VP Academic
SFU Policy R 50.02 “Employment of Personnel Funded from Research”	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/R50-02.pdf	
Template Employment Offer Letter under R 50.02	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/r50-02app-rev2016.doc	Revised in 2016
SFU Policy R 50.03 “Postdoctoral Fellows”	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/R50-03edrevNov2016.pdf	Revised November 2016
Sample Employment Letter for Grant-funded Postdoctoral Fellow	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/r50-03appB-rev2016.doc	Revised in 2016
Sample Invitation Letter for Externally-funded Postdoctoral Fellow	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/R50-03appC-rev2017.pdf	Revised in 2017
Appendix to R 50.03 “Access to University Services and Facilities”	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/r50-03appD-rev2017.pdf	Revised in 2017. SFU ID, Library privileges, Computing Services, guidance for Visas and medical insurance, Parking, Rec services, SFU Health & Counseling Services, career counseling
Document “SFU Postdoctoral Fellow Registration Form”	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/r50-03appA-rev2016.pdf	
SFU Policy R 50.04 “University Research Assistants”	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/policies/files/research_policies/50_series/R50-04.pdf	
2017 Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide	www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/FinancialAdminGuide-GuideAdminFinancier/index_eng.asp	Use of Grants sub-section on Compensation-Related Expenses & accompanying Notes sub-section (non-eligible expenses)
MITACS Policies page	https://www.mitacs.ca/en/about-mitacs/policies	Use of Funds policy refers to NSERC’s Use of Grant Funds document
Genome Canada Guidelines for Funding	https://www.genomecanada.ca/sites/default/files/publications/guidelinesforfunding.pdf	Sub-section on Salaries (allows actual benefit rates including group insurance and group pension)
Document “Collective Agreement between Simon Fraser Student Society and CUPE3338”	http://cupe3338.ca/wp-content/uploads/CA-Unit-5-2019.pdf	Through August 31, 2019. Articles 4.6 “Student” and 4.7 “Project Worker”: Employees of Simon Fraser Student Society
SFU student health insurance and coverage rates	http://studentcare.ca/rte/en/SimonFraserUniversityundergraduatestudentsSFSS_Home http://studentcare.ca/RTEContent/Document/EN/Brochure/Current_SFSS.pdf	\$267.75/annum auto-enrol \$401.63/annum self-enrolment Opt-out and change-of-coverage provisions available

Document: Sample University Research Associate Appointment Package	Hard copy received from Catherine Stoddart, Director, Faculty Relations (January 16, 2018) – personal information blacked out	Includes memo to VP Academic, Recommendation For Appointment Form, Appointment Letter, memo to Department Chair, Email trail with Research Accounting to confirm funding availability.
Document: Sample Payroll Appointment Form (PAF) and Guide	PAF: https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/finance/Payroll/PAF.pdf Guide: https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/finance/Payroll/How%20to%20Complete%20PAF%20form.pdf	
Document: Summary chart of treatment of payments	http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/finance/Payments/Summary%20Chart%20of%20Treatment%20of%20Payments.pdf	Indicates that payments include honoraria, consulting arrangements and research. Such payments may be routed through Accounts Payable rather than through Payroll
Document: Guide for Completion of Payment Requisition Form	https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/finance/Payments/Instructions%20to%20Payment%20Requisition%20Form.docx	Honoraria – As per SFU Payment of Honoraria Policy an honorarium is a token payment for services, should be infrequent and one time in nature and must not normally exceed \$2,500. Other: If this option is selected you must have rationale clearly stated in details of payment section. ***For all Expenses being claimed under Specific Purpose, Research and Capital funds 2X, 3X and 5X enter a description of how this expenditure relates to the funding source and route them to the appropriate administration center.
SFU Institutional Research and Planning – Fingertip Statistics	https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/irp/documents/fingertip.pdf	Staffing figures: Academic 972.1 Support (Academic) 476.1 Support (Admin) 1,346.1 TOTAL: 2,794.3
Document headed “Non-Affiliated Temporary Appointments”	Hard copy provided by Sandi de Domenico in January 2018; attributed to Mark Zimmerman, Director of Strategy, Planning & Projects.	Analysis of January 27, 2017 pay run for figures related to research personnel.
SFU CURIE Memorandum of Understanding	PDF provided by Stephen Caine, Manager, Risk, January 25, 2018	Acknowledges CURIE coverage of grant-funded employees. Uses language “Grant-funded Employees conduct work at and on behalf of the University”

Sample postdoc ad	PDF (from 2010) provided by Barbara Frisken, January 16, 2018	Briefly worded posting, with few job description details
Sample postings and employment/appointment letters from KEY (Big Data Hub)	Documents provided by Seychelle Cushing via email, February 16, 2018	Postings and letters contain job description details
Sample employment contract	PDF provided by Professor Charlotte Waddell, February 1, 2018. No copy retained.	No copy retained for this project. Professor Waddell had this drafted with assistance from employment lawyer hired separately from SFU. This remains intellectual property of her lab.
SFU 20-year sustainability vision	Online: https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/sustainability/Documents/SFU%2020-Year%20Sustainability%20Vision%20and%20Goals%20(Feb%2028).pdf	One of the Vision pillars “SFU is a safe, inclusive, diverse, <u>equitable</u> , and healthy campus community.” Goal: “SFU cultivates a strong sense of community, <u>institutional spirit and pride</u> .” Goal: “SFU is known for placing value on the <u>health and well-being of its community</u> .” Goal: “SFU is an <u>inclusive</u> institution that works to break down all forms of systematic <u>injustice</u> .” Goal: “SFU employees are provided with a <u>fair and equitable income</u> .”
SFU five-year sustainability strategy	Online: https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/sustainability/Documents/SFU%2020-Year%20Sustainability%20Vision%20and%20Goals%20(Feb%2028).pdf	SFU’s values & commitments towards social sustainability: “Engage all our communities in building a <u>robust and ethical</u> society.”

E. Peer Institution Research Summary & Sources

Research Approach

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

Online research for each institution included:

- Review of policies for any information related to research personnel
- For each institution, a Google search for “[institution name +] research assistants”, “[institution name +] research associate”, “[institution name +] postdoctoral” and a review of the first two pages of results for each term for relevant information
- Review of HR webpages for employment groups, benefit plans and collective agreements for evidence of treatment of research personnel

Research Findings

There appears to be no ‘single’ best practice set of classes for research personnel. Institutions had between three and ten classes of research personnel (a total of 43 classes including duplicates) including the following job titles:

- Research Assistants (various levels)
- Student Research Assistants
- Volunteer Research Assistants
- Research Technical Support/Technician
- Research Professional
- Research Manager
- Research Administrative Support
- “Grant” PDF (equivalent: internal, associates)

- “External” PDF (equivalent: award, stipend, trainee, guest)
- Research Associate
- Senior Research Associate/Scientist
- Trust Administrator
- Trust Researcher
- Research Personnel (general category)
- University Research Associate (unique to SFU)
- University Research Assistant (unique to SFU)

Regarding employment relationship, of the 59 classes identified across the 13 institutions, 71% were identified as employees of the institution:

- 42 were identified as employees of the institution
- 3* were identified as employees of the Principal Investigator (*one role at UNBC could be either employee of institution or PI)
- 7 were identified as holding appointments or scholarships but with no employment relationship to either the institution or to the Principal Investigator
- 8 were not identified

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:

- 42 were eligible for benefits or limited benefits
 - The majority receiving benefits were dependent on funder policy, negotiation upon employment offer and amount and length of service (often a minimum requirement of 25%-50% FTE and between 3-12 months of service)
 - Benefits offered often were not on par with those of other university staff (limited information available). For example, many plans covered MSP (equivalent), statutory deductions and leave top-ups, but did not offer EHC/Dental to research personnel.
 - The reality is likely that in many instances, members of those classes are not receiving benefits through their research roles.
- 6 classes were not entitled to benefits
- 11 classes could not be identified with respect to benefit eligibility and entitlement
- A few institutions offer benefits plans that personnel can opt into and pay 100% of the premiums where they might not qualify for employer paid benefits

These figures appear to be supported by the research on Postdoctoral employment at 60 Canadian institutions by Dr. Peter Clark in October 2017.

The details of this research are provided in the table below. The table columns call out research role titles, indicate employment relationship, list governing policies and procedures, and summarize benefits eligibility identified. Where possible, links to online information sources are provided.

Summary Table of Peer Institution Practices

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
UBC	Grant PDF (plays key role on research team under direction of and funded by supervisor)	X			Policy 61	Yes	Faculty Plan
	External PDF (“Award PDF”) (competitive fellowship from external agency, whether or not paid through UBC)			X (Appointment to UBC but no employment relationship)	Policy 61	Yes	(no deductions) Extraordinary expense fund to cover leaves; no mention of E&D
	Other research staff (CUPE116, BCGEU Okanagan)	X			Collective Agreements CUPE 116 BCGEU Okanagan	Yes	As per collective agreement
	Non-unionized Technicians and Research Assistants	X			TRA Handbook Research Assistantships Payroll deductions	Yes	As outlined in TRA Handbook (E&D if > 3 month term)
	Research Associates	X			Policy 42	Yes	Faculty Plan
University of Victoria	Grant funded employees , including: Research Assistant, Research Fellow, Research Associate, Research Scientist, Research Programmer, Research Technician (and other such titles as may be appropriate)		X		HR6305 “Employment Under Externally-Funded Grants and Contracts” HR6325 covers “members of the University community” GV0205 covers “members of the University community”	Depends	May apply to participate provided that grantee has agreed that the employer’s share of premiums be paid from grant or contract funds.

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
	Externally-funded Post Doctoral Fellow			X (Appointment at the University)	HR6310	Depends	Plan available if offered by supervisor; self-paid. UVic medical, dental and extended health benefits are not mandatory
	Grant-funded Post Doctoral Fellow		X		HR6310	Depends	Plan available if offered by supervisor; cost shared. UVic medical, dental and extended health benefits are not mandatory
University of Northern British Columbia	Student Research Assistant	X	X	X (scholarship income, fellowship income, research grant income)	Policies are intranet only and not publicly-accessible. Finance guide mentions employee-employer relationship, but does	Depends	Statutory employment benefits if employment income, otherwise no benefits.

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
					not indicate who employer is		
	PDF1 – Employee under Supervisor grant/funding	X			<u>Post-doctoral Fellow Guide</u>	Yes	Statutory and mandatory benefits from supervisor grant. Other benefits case-by-case.
	PDF2 – Fellowship funding awarded to PDF or from Supervisor; Administered by UNBC			X	<u>Post-doctoral Fellow Guide</u>	No	PDF receiving earnings directly from external funding sources is not eligible for benefits and is encouraged to make private arrangements. "The university wishes to include all PDFs in the health benefits, and is actively working on this with their benefits provider (September 2014)"

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
	PDF3 – Externally funded; not Administered by UNBC			X	Post-doctoral Fellow Guide	No	PDF receiving earnings directly from external funding sources is not eligible for benefits and is encouraged to make private arrangements. "The university wishes to include all PDFs in the health benefits, and is actively working on this with their benefits provider (September 2014)"
	Research Associate	X			Research Personnel Recruitment Guide	Depends	Benefits available and funded from grant monies if eligible
	Research Manager	X			Research Personnel Recruitment Guide	Depends	Benefits available and funded from grant monies if eligible

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
	Research Skills Development Trainee	X			Research Personnel Recruitment Guide	Depends	Benefits available and funded from grant monies if eligible
	Research Assistant I	X			Research Personnel Recruitment Guide	Depends	Benefits available and funded from grant monies if eligible
	Research Assistant II	X			Research Personnel Recruitment Guide	Depends	Benefits available and funded from grant monies if eligible
	Research Assistant III	X			Research Personnel Recruitment Guide	Depends	Benefits available and funded from grant monies if eligible
University of Alberta	Trust Researcher (Research Scientist, Research Associate)	X			HR is involved in classification and job description	?	(no declarative information)
	Trust Administrator	X			HR is involved in classification and job description	?	(no declarative information)
	PDF	X (Future – Bill 7)		X (Current - Trainee)	Post-doctoral Fellows Appointment Procedure states PDFs are not employees of the	Yes	Covered by faculty member, home department or Trust Fund

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
					University – soon will be employees under Bill 7.		
	Research Assistant			No info		No info	
University of Calgary	Research personnel	X (AUPE)		X (where student, relationship unclear; see GSA 5.4.d)	No internal policies related to research personnel; HR resource on research staff groups includes reference to Full-Time researchers and student researchers	?	Not identified
	Postdoctoral Associates	X			Bill 7 (Alberta legislation)	<u>Yes</u>	“at no cost to the participant”
	Postdoctoral Fellowships	X			Bill 7 (Alberta legislation)	<u>Yes</u>	“at no cost to the participant”
	Guest Postdocs	X				<u>Yes</u>	“at no cost to the participant”
University of Manitoba	Research Associate (“Research Academic Staff”)	X			<u>Guidelines</u>	Yes	Eligible for University staff plan benefits if 50%+ FTE for 12+months
	Student Research Assistants (“other academic staff”)			X	<u>Guidelines</u>	?	

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
	Technicians	X (AESES or CUPE 1482)			<u>Guidelines</u>	Yes	By collective agreement
	Research Assistants	X (AESES or CUPE 1482)			<u>Guidelines</u>	Yes	By collective agreement
University of Toronto	Research Associates (Limited Term)	X			<u>Facilitated by HR</u>	Yes	
	Senior Research Associates	X			<u>Facilitated by HR</u>	Yes	
	Internal Postdocs	X (<u>CUPE 3902 Unit 5</u>)			<u>Policies for Post-doctoral Fellows</u> <u>Administrative Procedures for Engagement of Post-Doctoral Fellows</u> : The engagement letter does not establish an employment relationship; the post-doctoral fellow is responsible for his/her own income tax and other statutory obligations.	Yes	Mandatory enrolment
	PDF trainees on stipend			X (trainee)	<u>Policies for Post-doctoral Fellows</u> Post-doctoral fellows are, in essence, trainees, who contract with the	Depends	Eligible to enrol

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
					University to provide their services in exchange for developmental opportunities provided by the University. They are not employees.		
	Volunteer Research Assistants			X	No associated policy, but formal posting mechanism exists	No	
Ryerson University	Research Assistants (work-study, non-union summer, or OPSEU-affiliated)	X (OPSEU)			No applicable policy	No	OPSEU gets minimum rate and pregnancy leave
	PDFs (does not distinguish internal/external)	X (MAC Post Doc Employee Group)			No applicable policy	Yes	If >24 hours/week receive \$2,500 HSA & 19-week mat leave top-up
	Research Technical Support	X			No applicable policy; <u>research staff classification</u>	Limited	If >24 hours/week
	Research Professional	X			No applicable policy; <u>research staff classification</u>	Limited	If >24 hours/week
	Research Administrative Support	X			No applicable policy; <u>research staff classification</u>	Limited	If >24 hours/week
McMaster University	CUPE 3906 PDF	X			<u>PDF Policy</u>	Yes	Working at McMaster benefits plan &

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
							Collective Agreement; medical covered by grant or supervisor; dental covered by PDF
	Health Sciences PDF			Unknown	<u>PDF Policy</u>	Yes	Working at McMaster benefits plan; covered by grant or supervisor; dental covered by PDF
	Research Assistant			Unknown		?	No information identified.
University of Saskatchewan	Research Associate	X (assumed; see Guidelines)			<u>Research classification Guidelines</u> ; based on classifications and offering of pension	Possible	If supervisor offers and grant allows. If minimum hours worked EHC/Dental, Pension after 6 months, disability after 2 years.
	Research Scientist/Senior Research Scientist	X (assumed; see Guidelines)			<u>Research classification Guidelines</u> ; based on classifications and offering of pension	Possible	If supervisor offers and grant allows. If minimum hours worked

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
					<u>Policy on Eligibility to Apply for, Hold and Administer Research Funding</u> : "Research Personnel appointed by Department Head, Dean or Director"		EHC/Dental, Pension after 6 months, disability after 2 years.
	Postdoctoral Fellow			X (trainee)	<u>Policy on Postdoctoral Fellows</u> Re salary: "In those cases where there are no specific guidelines, the University of Saskatchewan requires that PDFs receive a minimum salary of at least 1.75 times the Ph.D.-level University Graduate Scholarship award (currently \$35,000)."	No	<u>In policy</u> : Since PDFs are appointed to trainee positions they are not considered to be in an employment relationship and as such are not subject to legislated labour benefits. Health, Dental and Life insurance available as opt-in through Graduate Student Society
	Applied Scientific Services (Research Technician)	X (<u>CUPE1975</u>)			<u>Research classification Guidelines</u>	Yes	If >6 month term <u>Benefits Summary</u>

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
	Operational Services (Research Clerical Assistant)	X (CUPE1975)			<u>Research classification Guidelines</u>	Yes	If >6 month term <u>Benefits Summary</u>
	Research Assistant/Research Officer	X (assumed; see skills matrix)			<u>Skills Matrix</u> based on classifications and offering of pension to those with <6 month terms	Possible	If supervisor offers and grant allows. If minimum hours worked EHC/Dental, Pension after 6 months, disability after 2 years.
University of Western Ontario	Postdoctoral Fellow			X (trainee)	<u>Policy 7.6</u> "In consultation with their faculty mentors, individuals receiving Postdoctoral appointments may determine that they will be either entering into an employment relationship with the University as Postdoctoral Associates, or be undertaking their training as independent Postdoctoral Fellows." "PDFs are not employees of the University, but rather individuals who contract with the	No	As per <u>Policy 7.6</u> , "PDFs are not entitled to any benefits which the University may extend to its employees."

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
					University to obtain specialized training”		
	Postdoctoral Associate	X (PSAC611)			<p><u>Policy 7.6</u> “In consultation with their faculty mentors, individuals receiving Postdoctoral appointments may determine that they will be either entering into an employment relationship with the University as Postdoctoral Associates, or be undertaking their training as independent Postdoctoral Fellows.”</p> <p><u>Guidance</u> on PDA salaries</p>	Limited	<p>As per <u>Policy 7.6</u>, “PDAs are not entitled to benefits which the University may extend to its other employees.”</p> <p><u>PSAC611 Collective Agreement</u> allows for supplementary mat leave, \$1,200 per annum Health Spending Account and personal counselling. Life and Accident available at 100% cost to PDA.</p>
	Research Associate			?	Referenced in the Postdoctoral Fellow policy (those who don’t meet criteria for	?	No direct reference in employee groups listing.

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
					PDF/PDA may be termed research associates)		
	Research Assistant	X (<u>UWOSA</u>)			<p>UWO Staff Association <u>Collective Agreement</u> If 8 months or more; 24 hours or more a week (Grant-funded employees cannot be identified for displacement, nor displace others)</p> <p>See Appendix A for Term Employee limitations</p> <p><u>Guidance</u> on Student Assistant salaries</p>	Limited	Sick leave and mat leave supplement; but health/dental are not offered to term employees (and likely most grant-funded employees are on terms). See Appendix A of collective agreement.
	Lab Technician/Research Technician	X (<u>UWOSA</u>)			<p>UWO Staff Association <u>Collective Agreement</u> If 8 months or more; 24 hours or more a week (Grant-funded employees cannot be identified for displacement, nor displace others)</p> <p>See Appendix A for Term Employee limitations</p>	Limited	Sick leave and mat leave supplement; but health/dental are not offered to term employees (and likely most grant-funded employees are on terms). Appendix A of

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
							collective agreement.
	Lab Supervisor	X (UWOSA)			UWO Staff Association <u>Collective Agreement</u> If 8 months or more; 24 hours or more a week (Grant-funded employees cannot be identified for displacement, nor displace others). See Appendix A for Term Employee limitations	Limited	Sick leave and mat leave supplement; but health/dental are not offered to term employees (and likely most grant-funded employees are on terms). Appendix A of collective agreement.
University of Waterloo	Research Assistant (student)	X			Title assigned to registered Graduate and Undergraduate students only	Yes if >1 year appointment	As per <u>benefits summary</u> .
	General Assistant (non-student research assistant, technician, scientist, project manager)	X			In Staff Job Description <u>Listing</u>	Yes if >1 year appointment	As per <u>benefits summary</u> . Compensation and benefits calculations <u>guidelines</u> .

Institution	Research Personnel Classifications	Employer			Governing Policies & Procedures	Benefits	
		Institution	PI	Unknown/ Other			
	Postdoctoral Fellows	X (assumed; see guidelines)			<p>Guidelines: "Each Postdoctoral Fellow must <i>be affiliated with</i> a University of Waterloo faculty member whose responsibility it is to recruit, select and supervise postdoctoral fellows." "The appointment shall expire, without any further payment <i>obligations by the University</i>"</p>	Yes	As per <u>benefits summary</u> .
University of Guelph	Research Personnel (No public information on employment relationships or benefits was uncovered)			X	Research personnel not featured in any of the employee groups	?	No information identified.