

Research Funded Positions Employment Policy

Category: Human Resources

Jurisdiction: Vice President, Finance and Administration and Vice President, Research and Innovation

Approval Authority: Executive Team

Established on: April 15th, 2025

Amendments: None

Most Recent Review:

1. Purpose and Scope

- A.** As a research-intensive University, Sponsors provide Research Funding to Lakehead University through specific Funding Agreements for Research conducted by Principal Investigators and their Research teams. Lakehead University also provides internal Research Funding to support capacity development. Once a Funding Agreement is finalized, the Research Funding is sent to the University and held in trust. Both the Principal Investigator and the University are accountable to the Sponsor for complying with the terms of the Funding Agreement, relevant policies and regulations, and reporting on how Research Funding is spent. Lakehead University is the legally binding authority for all Research and therefore bound to all obligations set forth in the Funding Agreement, including the management of Research Funding on behalf of Principal Investigators.
- B.** This policy details the requisition, recruitment, and terms of employment for all fixed term Researcher positions, whether full-time or part-time, which are Sponsor-funded through a Funding Agreement. Employment positions that fall under this policy have a specified start date and end date through a Funding Agreement and will not continue beyond the duration of the Funding Agreement term.
- C.** This policy provides guidance to University Principal Investigators when hiring fixed term employees whose income is derived from Research Funding under the **Fund 50** category. This policy does not apply to postdoctoral fellow, student and trainee award recipients, or funding that falls under the **Fund 40** category.

2. Definitions

- A. Funding Agreement:** a written agreement that sets out the terms and conditions that a Sponsor, University and Principal Investigator agree to for a particular grant or award. It defines the Principal Investigator's responsibilities, the use of funds, expected milestones and deliverables, Research timelines and financial reporting requirements, what constitutes a breach of the agreement, and the consequences of such breach. Principal Investigators are not authorized to sign a Research Funding Agreement on behalf of the University; however, Principal Investigators must sign an acknowledgement on all Funding Agreements to ensure their acceptance and understanding of the terms of the Funding Agreement.
- B. Parties:** the Sponsor, the University and the Principal Investigator, or a combination thereof, of a Funding Agreement.
- C. Principal Investigator:** has primary responsibility for the overall intellectual direction of the Research, Research-related activity or collaboration. The Principal Investigator is accountable, along with the University, for coordinating the overall financial and administrative aspects on the use of the Research Funding from which the Researcher is paid. Principal Investigators are individuals who have been given Research privileges by way of their employment or relationship with the University, and may include faculty members, research professors, postdoctoral fellows, adjunct professors, emeriti professors, or University staff authorized by the Vice-President, Research and Innovation or other University approval authority.
- D. Research:** a set of scientific, literary, and artistic works and activities having as its purpose for the discovery, development, application, and dissemination of knowledge (Canada Revenue Agency definition of research 2018). For the purposes of this policy, Research shall be under the direction of the University, Sponsor and Principal Investigator.
- E. Research Funding:** any internal or external grant, award or funding through a Funding Agreement which has been secured for Research purposes by a Principal Investigator, and which has been placed under the administrative care of the University.
- F. Researcher:** means an individual who aims to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation and including applying for and managing funds, performing research, and disseminating results. For the purposes of this policy, Researchers are fixed term employees of the University hired through Research Funding under the Fund 50 category to perform duties of a research, clerical, administrative, technical, professional and/or managerial nature in support of Research activities at the University.

- G. RFP Employees:** Research Funded Positions employees classified under the RFP Salary Grid, for the purposes of this policy synonymous with 'Researchers'.
- H. RFP Salary Grid:** Research Funded Positions Salary Grid, as referenced in Section 4.1 A.
- I. Sponsor:** a government agency (municipal, provincial, or federal), not-for-profit organization, foundation, business, industry, or donor providing Research Funding in the form of an award, donation, grant in support of Research, and enters into a Funding Agreement.
- J. Supervisor:** the Researcher's immediate supervisor, who has managerial authority over the Researcher and is further defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/supervisors-under-occupational-health-and-safety-act>.
- K. University:** Lakehead University

3. Principles

- A.** This policy applies to Research Funding and Researchers on a fixed term contract under **Fund 50** category.
- B.** The Parties recognize the vital importance of Research, the new knowledge, and applications that it creates, the knowledgeable and skilled human resources developed through the process of conducting Research, as well as the importance of peer review, which ensures that all funded Research at the University meets the highest standards of excellence.
- C.** The Sponsor provides public and/or private funds to the University in trust to promote and assist Research and, therefore, both have a responsibility to use the funds as effectively as possible, to account for their use, allocation, and outcomes, and to help ensure that the activities supported are conducted in accordance with the highest ethical and financial standards. This obligation also applies to internal Research Funding.
- D.** The Parties are committed to promoting and adhering to the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research as set out specifically in the Lakehead University Research Integrity Policy (applies to non-LUFA employees, and students/trainees) as well as LUFA Collective Agreement Article 39: Research Integrity (applies to LUFA faculty members).
- E.** The Parties recognize the importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the conduct of Research, Research training, and Research Funding opportunities and policies, and are

committed to promoting equitable practices and eliminating systemic biases within the Research environment.

- F. All the individuals hired by Lakehead who meet the criteria of employee and are paid through payroll, shall be afforded the rights and responsibilities of prevailing legislations including but not limited to the Ontario Employment Standards Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, and any other legislation applicable to employees.

4. Policy Guidelines

4.1 Salary Administration

- A. Research Funded Position (“RFP”) employees are paid in accordance with the Research Funded Positions (RFP) Salary Grid (the “RFP Salary Grid”), as adjusted periodically at the direction of the University, based on internal and external comparators. The most up-to-date RFP Salary Grid is available on the University’s [Human Resources website](#).
- B. Researchers are assigned to a salary band on the RFP Salary Grid in accordance with the value of the position.
- C. Subject to G below, each salary band reflects the minimum and the maximum rates the University will pay to an employee in the position.
- D. The job requirements are generic for each band, which assists to maintain consistency. Further RFP Salary Grid job information is as follows:
- a. There are common responsibilities and elements of work that exist for RFP’s. Therefore, to facilitate ease of administration, standardized job classifications are available. In selecting an appropriate classification, the major duties and responsibilities assigned should match those outlined in the description. Depending on the nature of the Research project, the job may include only some or all of the duties outlined in the classification.
 - b. Principal Investigators are required to assign a position to each Researcher based on the provided job classification in the current RFP Salary Grid. The Researcher will be offered a salary falling within the provided salary bands. If a job does not match a standardized classification, or if there is uncertainty around the classification level, Principal Investigators should discuss with Human Resources to determine the appropriate salary band for the job.
- E. The RFP Salary Grid shall address salary inequities that may occur over time.

- F. The RFP Salary Grid will provide consistency with any funding limitations or parameters imposed by the Sponsor.
- G. In circumstances where the proposed starting salary is not in line with the RFP Salary Grid, an exception will be subject to approval of the Vice President, Research, and Innovation, in consultation with the Associate Vice-President of Human Resources, and will be based on documented evidence supporting the need to establish a starting salary outside of the policy.
- H. Principal Investigators are expected to work with Human Resources to ensure that salary increases are consistent with these principles and comply with University policies and procedures.
- I. Subject to availability of funds, salary step increases may be provided. Please refer to the procedures document available on the [Human Resource website](#).
- J. Any economic increase provided by the Board of Governors may be applicable to the RFP Salary Grid.
- K. Eligible Researchers will be enrolled in a non-statutory benefits program, subject to the condition that the University's share of the optional benefits program is eligible for payment from the Research funds and in accordance with any funding terms and conditions.
- L. Researchers on yearly contracts that are continuously renewed may be considered to have continuous employment. This classification impacts their entitlements to notice of termination and severance pay. If an employment contract is being renewed for the third consecutive year, please contact the Human Resources department.

4.2 Selective Salary Increases

- A. At any time during the term of the employment contract, and in situations where salary inequities exist or specific adjustments are required, a Principal Investigator may make a written request, with the necessary rationale to the Vice President, Research and Innovation, who in consultation with the Associate Vice President of Human Resources, may approve the adjustment of the annual salary of a Researcher by way of a selective salary step increase.

4.3 Hours of Work

- A. The regular working hours for full-time Researchers under this policy are thirty-five (35) hours per week. Part- time Researchers shall work less than thirty- five (35) hours per week.

- B. Hours of work are governed by and are compensated in accordance with the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000.

4.4 Vacation

- A. Researchers under this policy will receive vacation pay pursuant to the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000 unless otherwise articulated in their employment agreement.

4.5 Performance Review Process

- A. The University is committed to a performance assessment and development process, as performance feedback plays an essential role in assisting employees in their development. Supervisors of Researchers under this policy are encouraged to meet regularly with their employees to engage in ongoing performance dialogues. This includes adhering to the University's system of performance feedback and management process. Performance goal setting meetings and assessments to be held at least once annually.

4.6 Conflict of Interest

- A. The University has a policy that defines and addresses potential, apparent, and actual Conflicts of Interest. It provides guidance to employees, so that conflicts of interest are recognized, avoided, or resolved expeditiously through appropriate disclosure and management.
- B. In Accordance with Article 16.03.07 of the LUFA Collective Agreement, any faculty member wishing to employ any member of their family under a University administered Research Agreement must obtain prior written approval from the Vice-President, Research and Innovation and Associate Vice-President (Human Resources).

5. Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties

5.1 The Principal Investigator's Responsibilities:

- A. The Principal Investigator conducts Research and Research-related activities ethically and in compliance with policies, terms and conditions of the University and the Funding Agreement.

- B.** The Principal Investigator may also oversee a Research team. Therefore, the Principal Investigator authorizes activity and expenses on funded Research projects.
- C.** The Principal Investigator is the signing authority on all approved expenditures for the Research project and is responsible for ensuring that salary expenditures against the Research Funding meets the following criteria:
 - a.** Supports the Research objectives outlined in the Research application and Funding Agreement.
 - b.** Occurs within the effective Research Funding period.
 - c.** Complies with all terms and conditions of the Research project, including reporting requirements set by the Sponsor and eligibility of salary payments.
 - d.** Ensures due diligence for the most effective use of Research Funding.
 - e.** Does not exceed spending beyond the available Research funds.
 - f.** Regularly review the monthly account activity for completeness and accuracy.
 - g.** Complies with all applicable University policies and procedures.
- D.** The Principal Investigator shall determine whether or not the support of further Researchers will be required.
- E.** The Principal Investigator must follow the policies of the University and work with Human Resources to comply with all statutory obligations of the employer, including the obligation to provide mandatory employer costs.
- F.** The Principal Investigator shall exercise sole control and direction over the assignment of duties and the work performed by a Researcher under their supervision and carry out all responsibilities of a Supervisor as defined by employment legislation.
- G.** The Principal Investigator is required to consult with Human Resources regarding discipline, and/or termination matters.

5.2 The University's Responsibilities:

- A.** The University provides administrative services for the receipt and disbursement of Research Funding.
- B.** The University must maintain employment records for Researchers.
- C.** Supervisors have statutory obligations, and the University will provide guidance as appropriate.

- D. With respect to both statutory and non-statutory employee benefits, the Principal Investigator may consult with administrative departments such as - Human Resources or Financial Services.

5.2.1 Office of Research Services Responsibilities:

- A. The Office of Research Services will work collaboratively with Human Resources and Financial Services to raise awareness of a Principal Investigator's responsibilities in implementing this policy.
- B. The Office of Research Services will review budgets within Research proposals to ensure the eligibility of expenses and that adequate Research Funding is included to support salaries and benefits in accordance with this policy.

6. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every 5 years by the Associate Vice-President of Human Resources.

Review Period: 5 years.

Date for Next Review: 2029-2030.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on university policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002.

Phone: 807-346-7929 or Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca.

7. Acknowledgements

- A. McMaster University
- B. Simon Fraser University
- C. For Additional Information, please See Lakehead's Application and Administration of External Research Grants and Contracts Policy