

Academic Researcher Unit (RA Unit) New Contract Overview
Academic Personnel, UC Merced

1. New Bargaining Unit:

- a. New RA Unit is represented by the UAW (UAW also represents Postdocs and ASEs).
- b. Specialists (including Junior Specialists), Project Scientists, and Professional Researchers.

2. Who is not in the Unit?

- a. Supervisors (must meet HEERA definition of supervisor)
- b. Without Salary appointments
- c. Visiting appointments (must actually be visiting from another institution, per APM 230)

3. Appointment Length

- a. New hire appointments shall be for a minimum of one year except in cases where there is documented lack of work, lack of appropriate funding, programmatic need.
- b. After first merit review, regardless of the outcome, any reappointments are for normative period of review for rank and step. No exceptions. If needed, see layoff provisions.
- c. Steps of indefinite duration must be reviewed at least every five years with a minimum of a 3-year appointment, and, if reappointed, followed by a 2-year appointment.

4. Merit and Promotion Review Process

- a. All local policies/procedures are followed.
- b. The contract requires written notification of eligibility at least 6 weeks before materials are due.

5. Appointment Percentage

- a. Workload must be commensurate with appointment percentage.
- b. Academic Researchers may be exempt (monthly) or non-exempt (hourly) based on salary/percent of appointment. Non-exempt academic researchers report hours worked and are eligible for over-time.
- c. BEST PRACTICES:
 - i. Set work schedule to align with appointment percentage, e.g., 80% = Mon-Thurs
 - ii. Avoid odd appointment percentages, e.g., 60%, not 63.2%
 - iii. Avoid 49% appointments (just shy of eligible for benefits)
 - iv. For any part-time appointee, PI should document how they assign workload in such a way that workload does not exceed appointment percentage.
- d. Documented temporary augmentations are permitted.

6. Layoff and Reduction in Time

- a. A Layoff or Reduction in Time may be based on documented lack of appropriate funding, lack of work, or change in programmatic need.
- b. Exception: Special provision only for Principal Investigators to reduce their own salary as an alternative to layoff or reduction in time as long as the PI retains exempt status.

7. Non-Reappointment

- a. Written notice of non-reappointment may be required depending on appointment percent and years of service.

8. Without Salary (WOS) Appointment

- a. Generally, Academic Researchers who have been laid off or have not been reappointed due to lapse of funding, even if future funding is expected, are not eligible for a WOS appointment.
- b. Exception exists for Principal Investigators only who may or may not be eligible for a WOS appointment.

9. Work Authorization Paperwork on Reappointment

- a. Only upon reappointment, the University may be liable for failing to process work authorization (visa) paperwork promptly.

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- b. Any remedy due to the Academic Researcher would be calculated in reference only to pay lost during the time the University was solely responsible for the delay.

10. Salary

- a. Range Adjustment to Base Salary
- i. January 1, 2020
 - 4% Range Adjustment – Specialists and Project Scientists
 - 4.5% Range Adjustment – Professional Researchers
 - ii. July 1, 2020
 - 3% Range Adjustment
 - iii. July 1, 2021
 - 3% Range Adjustment
 - iv. July 1, 2022
 - 3% Range Adjustment
 - v. NOTE: Unlike all other academic appointees, the represented Academic Researchers did not receive a range adjustment in 2019.
- a. Equity and Smoothing
- i. For some of the ranks and steps in the Specialist and Project Scientist series, there will be additional increases over the life of the contract to address:
 - Compression with Postdoc Salary Scale
 - Compression with Staff Research Associate Scale
 - Unequal increments between steps
 - ii. Equity and Smoothing does not impact the B/E/E scales
- b. Off-scale components
- i. Contract permits off-scale components to salary
 - ii. Increases to the off-scale components are at the location's discretion
 - iii. Off-scale components are not range adjusted.
 - iv. Off-scale components must be \$100 increments.
- c. Merit/Promotion Increases
- i. Salaries are subject to merit/promotion increases.
 - System-wide Salary Scales: <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/compensation/index.html>
 - Represented salary scales are as follows (N = non-exempt/hourly scales):
 - Specialist series (including Junior Specialists): Tables 24-B* and 24-B(N)
 - Project Scientist series: Tables 37-B*, 37-B(N), 38-B, and 38-B(N)
 - Professional Researcher series: Tables 13-B, 13-B(N), 14-B, and 14-B(N)
- *Salary scale models for the equity and smoothing of salary scale tables 24B and 37B are available in Appendix A-2 (https://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/labor/bargaining-units/ra/docs/ra_2019-2022_appendix_a-2_project-scientist-and-specialist-salary-scale-models.pdf) – please note that these are not the official salary scales but they may be used for budget planning. As is practice, the Office of the President is responsible for issuing the official salary scales effective 7/1/2020, 7/1/2021, and 7/1/2022.

Academic Personnel Resources/Information page for the RA Unit:
<https://academicpersonnel.ucmerced.edu/resources/academic-researchers-unit-ra-unit-toolkit>