
Hiring Research Assistants Procedures

Policy Sponsor:	Vice President, Academic
Name of Parent Policy:	Hiring Research Assistants Policy
Policy Contact:	Manager, Research Services
Procedure Contact:	Manager, Research Services
Effective Date of Procedures:	December 14, 2015
Review Date:	Annually

Purpose

To provide direction for the recruitment and hiring of Research Assistants.

Definitions

Principal Investigator	A researcher who holds a grant, award and/or other funding and who is also responsible for the intellectual leadership, conduct and financial management of a Research project.
Research	An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation.
Research Assistant	An individual hired on a temporary basis for the purpose of assisting in academic Research. A Research Assistant reports to the Principal Investigator but is not directly responsible for the outcome of the Research.

Procedure Statements

The Research Centre provides advice to Principal Investigators regarding the recruitment and hiring of Research Assistants and is responsible for:



- providing direction regarding required documentation;
- assisting the Principal Investigator to secure required approvals;
- confirming available funding;
- notifying the Principal Investigator of relevant budget codes;
- assisting with the interpretation of criteria related to eligible and ineligible expenses;
- processing expense claims; and
- maintaining related financial records.

The Principal Investigator is responsible for:

- developing a recruitment plan, taking into consideration potential conflicts of interest;
- determining the expectations and duties of the Research Assistant;
- authorizing timesheets and expense claims submitted by the Research Assistant;
- discussing, at the outset of the appointment, how the contributions of the Research Assistant will be acknowledged;
- assisting the Research Assistant to acquire a sound understanding of relevant policies and procedures, legislation and professional codes of conduct governing the Research;
- providing training on the proper use of required equipment and materials;
- securing office and/or laboratory space, library privileges, and computing and e-mail access for the Research Assistant, as appropriate; and
- supervising the Research Assistant.

The Principal Investigator shall identify the category of Research Assistant to be hired, using the descriptions of duties and qualifications that follow as a guide in determining expectations and the rate of pay. The remuneration rate for each category is determined by Human Resources, in accordance with the relevant collective agreement, and is subject to change without prior notice. Current rates can be found at <http://intra.athabasca.ca/depts/human-resources/benefits/index.php>

RESEARCH ASSISTANT 1

- Works under direct supervision and in accordance with guidelines provided. Conducts straightforward literature reviews. Collects and records data using structured techniques. Conducts interviews (e.g., face-to-face, telephone, online) using structured interview schedules. Engages in straightforward programming. Computes statistics. Codes qualitative data. Begins to acquire skills related to Research dissemination. Qualifications and experience may vary according to the nature of the project. The minimum, however, is two-to-three years of related education, experience, or combination of both.



RESEARCH ASSISTANT 2

- Works under general supervision and in accordance with guidelines provided. Judgment is required. Conducts increasingly complex literature reviews. Collects and records data using structured techniques, including administration of survey instruments. Conducts semi-structured or unstructured interviews. Engages in qualitative or quantitative data analysis, or both, under supervision. Engages in simple programming, under supervision. Contributes to writing of draft reports. Assists with preparing materials for Research dissemination (e.g., drafting documents, creating visuals). Qualifications and experience may require an undergraduate degree in the subject area or three-to-four years of related education, experience, or combination of both.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT 3

- Manages aspects of projects independently; may supervise other Research Assistants. Judgment and analytic skills are required. Conducts complex literature reviews. Assists with development of Research instruments. Assists with preparing materials for ethics review. Helps recruit participants. Conducts semi-structured or unstructured interviews. Performs quantitative or qualitative data analysis, or both, under general supervision. Conducts moderately complex programming. Prepares and writes draft reports. Participates actively in Research dissemination (e.g., drafting presentations, designing visuals, co-presenting papers or posters, assisting in responding to inquiries about the Research). Qualifications and experience require an undergraduate degree in the subject area, or six to seven years of education, experience, or combination of both, including specialized skills related to the area.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT 4

- Works with a significant degree of independence and assumes major responsibility for project management (e.g., planning, resource estimation, coordination). May supervise other Research Assistants, laboratory or clerical staff. Manages project-related correspondence and equipment. Conducts highly complex literature reviews. Assists with the development of Research methodologies, including data collection and analysis strategies and related Research instruments. Recruits participants. Prepares materials for ethics review. Performs quantitative or qualitative data analysis, or both. Conducts complex programming. Assumes a lead role in the preparation and writing of reports. Assists with writing grant proposals. Assumes an increasingly independent role in Research dissemination (e.g., designing and preparing presentation, presenting papers or posters, responding directly to questions about the Research). Monitors project budget. Qualifications and experience require a graduate degree in the subject area. Related experience preferred, with previous Research experience required.



GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT (GRA)

GRA 1 - AU master/certificate/diploma student

GRA 2 - AU doctoral student

- A graduate Research Assistant is defined as a graduate assistant whose appointment is for the performance of Research and related duties. Research duties means work done on a Research project under the direction of a staff member. This may include collecting Research data, interviewing Research subjects, literatures searches, bibliographic work, writing drafts, presentations, and general Research services. A graduate Research Assistant position is viewed as an apprenticeship for furthering the student's academic or professional career.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Collective Agreement Between the Governors of Athabasca University and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees on behalf of Local 69](#)

[Collective Agreement Between the Governors of Athabasca University and Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association \(AUGSA\)](#)

[Terms and Conditions of Agreement Between the Governors of Athabasca University and Athabasca University Faculty Association \(AUFA\)](#)

Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[Hiring Research Assistants Policy](#)

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and related [Procedures](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Research Institutes Policy](#) and related [Procedures](#)

[Athabasca University Research Policies and related Procedures](#)

[Research Centre](#)

History

Executive Group, December 14, 2015 (approved)