

EMPLOYMENT POLICY FOR RESEARCH PERSONNEL

Position Levels and Ranks

Montana Tech will employ, as needed, research personnel for projects sponsored by state, federal, and private agencies. These positions will be advertised and competitively filled through the normal recruitment process. These employment contracts will be limited term, non-tenured and subject to renewal based on availability of funding. They will typically be renewable, 12-month, fiscal-year contracts, unless the project(s) are shorter in duration. Research personnel may be hired at five levels; Researcher I, Researcher II, Researcher III, Post-Doctoral Research Associate, and Research Faculty (with three possible ranks).

- Researcher I shall possess at least a Bachelor's degree in a field relevant to the requirements of the sponsored project. Responsibilities are to conduct research/development activities: performing experiments, simulations, theoretical calculations, and/or field work; making and recording detailed observations, analyzing data, and interpreting results; compiling results, documenting outcomes, and drafting or contributing to technical reports. Position requires knowledge of commonly used concepts, practices, and procedures in the field. Works under the supervision of a faculty member or principal investigator, following instructions and established guidelines/procedures to perform the job. May supervise undergraduate student workers. Alternative titles: Assistant Researcher or Assistant Research [Field], e.g. Assistant Research Chemist.
- Researcher II shall possess at least a Master's degree in a field relevant to the requirements of the sponsored project. A Bachelor's degree in a relevant field with 10 years of directly applicable research experience may be substituted for the Master's degree. Responsibilities are to conduct research/development activities: performing experiments, simulations, theoretical calculations, and/or field work; making and recording detailed observations, analyzing data, and interpreting results; compiling results, documenting outcomes, and preparing technical reports. Relies on experience and judgment to plan and conduct project tasks and accomplish goals. Position requires skill with standard concepts, practices, and procedures in the field. Works under general supervision of a faculty member or principal investigator, with some creativity, independence, and innovation required. May supervise undergraduate student researchers and serve on master's committees. Alternative titles: Associate Researcher or Associate Research [Field], e.g. Associate Research Engineer.
- Researcher III shall possess at least a Master's degree in a field relevant to the requirements of the sponsored project and at least 6 years of research experience directly applicable to the field and project. Responsibilities are to conduct research/development activities: performing experiments, simulations, theoretical calculations, and/or field work; making and recording detailed observations, analyzing data, and interpreting results; compiling results, documenting outcomes, and preparing technical reports. Relies on experience and judgment to plan, lead, and conduct project tasks and accomplish goals. Position requires familiarity, expertise, and skill with the full range of concepts, practices, and procedures applicable to the project(s) and field. Works under general supervision of a faculty member or principal investigator, with significant creativity, independence, and innovation required. May serve as project leader or co-principal investigator of sponsored

projects under the same conditions as faculty. May supervise undergraduate student researchers and serve on master's committees. Alternative titles: Researcher or Research [Field], e.g. Research Metallurgist.

- Post-Doctoral Research Associate shall possess a Ph.D. in a field relevant to the requirements of the contract. This position would typically be held for one to two years, and may not be extended beyond three years for any individual. Responsibilities are to plan, design and perform research, which may include experiments, simulations, theory, and/or field work, and to supervise undergraduate and graduate student researchers. A Post-Doctoral Research Associate is both a research professional and a trainee, gaining additional experience, prior to entering a faculty position. The Post-Doctoral Research Associate is expected to contribute significantly to the research plan, experimental design, to publications, and to proposals seeking funding. Post-Doctoral Research Associates are eligible to serve as co-principal investigators on proposals and grants under the same conditions as faculty. Those aspiring for academic careers would be expected to be supervised by a faculty member.
- Research Faculty shall possess a Ph.D. in a field relevant to the requirements of the contract. There are three ranks of research faculty: assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Research Faculty are expected to provide leadership of a project or major subproject and supervise undergraduate and graduate students, Post-Doctoral Research Associates, and Researchers I, II, and III. Research Faculty are eligible to serve as principal investigators and co-principal investigators on proposals under the same conditions as faculty. Research faculty are likely to be involved in and leading several small projects, a few moderate-sized projects, or one large and complex project.

Exceptions to the above educational qualifications may be made by the Chancellor on recommendation of the Vice Chancellor for Research in extraordinary situations.

Researcher I, Researcher II, and Researcher III

It is the policy of Montana Tech that salaries paid to Researchers I, II, and III should be competitive with salaries paid to national research and technology development peers. The starting salary range will be established using the College and University Professional Association (CUPA) 12-month salary survey information by position and discipline. The actual salary will be determined at the time of hire by the Vice Chancellor for Research and approved by the Chancellor.

The host department or Center will provide an annual performance evaluation recommending or denying an increase. Annual adjustments to the base salary will be made consistently with the annual increases for other personnel at Montana Tech.

Post-Doctoral Research Associate

Post-Doctoral Research Associate salaries may be established by specific conditions of the grant supporting the position. These positions shall generally be hired at a salary comparable to national averages for post-doctoral research associates in the field.

The host department will provide an annual performance evaluation recommending or denying an increase. Annual adjustments to the base salary will be made consistently with the annual

increases for other personnel at Montana Tech.

Research Faculty

For Research Faculty, the normal academic ranks of Assistant Research Professor, Associate Research Professor and Research Professor shall be available. The hiring authority shall determine the rank appropriate for the candidate selected for the position. Promotion between ranks will be governed by the normal promotion policies for Montana Tech faculty, excluding the teaching component. Individuals being promoted will be required to show excellence in research and service components.

A Research Faculty member has a 12-month appointment and is eligible for sick leave and vacation the same as professional staff. The following are criteria for each rank:

Assistant Research Professor: Assistant Research Professor is the normal entry-level rank for research faculty. The individual must have an earned doctorate in a field applicable to the project and have demonstrated potential for rapidly developing excellence in research and service.

Associate Research Professor: The rank of Associate Research Professor designates those who have achieved and demonstrated at least 5 years of progressively increasing responsibility in research accomplished with considerable excellence in their field, and have made significant contributions in service.

Research Professor: The rank of Research Professor is reserved for those who have reached the top of their profession in terms of research. It designates those who have achieved and demonstrated 10 years or more of progressively increasing responsibility accomplished with considerable excellence in research in their field, usually accompanied by national and/or international recognition, and they have achieved and demonstrated 5 years or more of excellence in service.

Individuals hired into a Research Faculty position without a terminal degree cannot be promoted beyond Assistant Professor, unless they attain the terminal degree. Promotion to Associate Professor can be made under exceptional circumstances, for an individual with a national reputation and productivity comparable to that of an associate professor. Such promotion must be recommended by the Vice Chancellor for Research and approved by the Chancellor.

Salaries

It is the policy of Montana Tech that salaries paid to all ranks of Research Professors engaged in extramurally funded research should be competitive with salaries paid to their external peer academic researchers. A competitive annual research salary range will be determined based on the College and University Professional Association (CUPA) average for the equivalent rank and discipline. The annual salary for new hires will be determined based on consideration of faculty rank, education levels, skills, experiences and responsibilities. A salary will be determined at the time of hire by the Vice Chancellor for Research and approved by the Chancellor.

The host department will provide an annual performance evaluation recommending or denying

an increase. Proposed adjustments to the base salary will be made utilizing the same process and criteria as for similar non-research positions at Montana Tech.

Teaching Duties

If a Researcher I, Researcher II, Researcher III, Post-Doctoral Research Associate, or Research Faculty member is requested to and chooses to perform teaching duties at Montana Tech for compensation, such teaching duties may be paid via a “buyout” (keeping the full salary unchanged) or through an Extra Compensation contract. Approval of the Extra Compensation contract must be obtained from the Department Head, Dean, the Vice Chancellor for Research and others as designated on the extra compensation form. The buyout or extra compensation for teaching will be paid at the prevailing campus rate on a per credit basis.

Promotion

Research personnel are eligible to request promotion to the next higher level. The promotion request should be prepared by the individual and should include evidence and documentation that the researcher has the qualifications and is fulfilling the responsibilities expected of incumbents at the higher level. The promotion request would typically include an overview and justification, along with documentation and evidence regarding: attainment of the required educational credential; changes and achievements in job duties and responsibilities for research, demonstrating the level of responsibility, independence, project development, leadership, and publications appropriate to the higher level; changes and achievements in campus service, public service, and outreach; national or international reputation and recognition; and other factors the individual would like to have considered. The promotion request would be submitted to the supervisor, who would review it and prepare a memorandum describing his/her recommendation and rationale to accompany the request to the next level manager. The promotion request would continue through the management levels, with each one adding a memorandum describing the manager’s recommendation and rationale, with the final review at the Executive Council and decision by the Chancellor.

In the event of a promotion, the associated salary increase would be referenced to the above salary surveys and to the typical promotion increase percentage or dollar amount prevailing at Montana Tech for similar non-research positions. The promotion timing would be the same as for non-research positions.

Research personnel may appeal negative promotion decisions by submitting the appeal in writing to the Vice Chancellor for Research within 15 days of notification of the negative decision. The Vice Chancellor for Research will appoint an Appeal Committee, which will review the case and make a recommendation to the Vice Chancellor for Research, who will rule on the appeal. If the individual wishes to appeal the decision of the Vice Chancellor for Research, he/she may appeal to the Chancellor. Any party adversely affected by the decision of the Chancellor may continue the appeal following the process described in Board of Regents Policy 203.5.2.

Contract Term

Research position contracts will be issued for a specified term, typically 12 months, and research personnel will be eligible for declared holidays for the general staff. These positions are not eligible for tenure and they are not eligible for college breaks. Any time taken away from work during academic recesses or breaks must be reported as annual leave. Benefits will accrue based on the position type in accordance with Board policy and applicable state statutes. Research personnel are eligible for other benefits, such as the Faculty/Staff Fee Waiver, available to other

Montana Tech staff. The Chancellor is the final approving authority for all employment contracts.

Effective Date:

This policy is effective July 1, 2017.

Donald M. Blacketter
Donald M. Blacketter, Chancellor

May 15, 2017
Date