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SECTION: Human Resources
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Procedure for: All Campuses
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I. Policy

This document describes the establishment of research grant and time-limited positions funded by federal grants, public charity grants, private foundation grants, research grants, medical school practice plans, individual private gifts, time-limited funds for specific projects, externally generated revenue for service or testing activities, and grant-generated revenue, or a combination of these funding sources, pursuant to Sections 8-11-196 and 59-101-730 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

- A. State appropriated funds may not be used to fund any portion of research grant or time-limited positions.
- B. Research grant or time-limited positions may not occupy FTE positions.
- C. Research grant positions may be established using other funds during the proposal development or pre-award stages of grant funding in anticipation of specific grant or project funding.
- D. Research grant or time-limited positions may be established for multiple years; however, they may not exist beyond the duration of the funding for the project or grant or any

subsequent renewal. At the discretion of the University, other funds may be used to fund continued employment between the expiration of one grant and the subsequent renewal of the same or similar grant, or the award of an additional grant. When funding for the project or grant ends or is insufficient to continue, research grant employees must be terminated and their positions will cease to exist.

- II. Terms of Employment for Employees in Research Grant or Time-limited Positions
 - A. Employees filling research grant or time-limited positions must sign a Research Grant or Time-limited Employment Agreement that specifies the terms and conditions of their employment including their entitlement to benefits, if any. The Employment Agreement is found on the Human Resources website at <http://hr.sc.edu/forms.html>.
 - B. Employees in research grant or time-limited positions are employed at-will and do not have grievance rights afforded to permanent state employees or faculty of the University. These employees may be terminated at any time with or without cause and without any right to compensation beyond the date of termination. However, internationals hired as H-1B employees must have the cost of return travel paid to their last country of residence abroad when terminated prior to the ending date of their H-1B status with USC.
 - C. Employees in research grant positions may be eligible for the same benefits available to permanent state employees with the exception of permanent or probationary employment status, provided funds are available within the grant or project, or that grant-generated revenue is used. Benefits may include eligibility for health, vision and dental insurance, annual and sick leave, and retirement benefits. If the employee is eligible and the benefits are funded, benefits will be administered within established University guidelines. Internationals hired as H-1B employees must be provided benefits equal to those allowed for U.S. workers.
 - D. Employees in research grant or time-limited positions are covered by workers' compensation and unemployment insurance.
 - E. Salary increases for employees in research grant or time-limited positions are determined on an individual basis since they are not eligible for automatic salary increases approved by the General Assembly or the University administration. These employees are not entitled to compensation beyond the date of termination other than for the part of the project or grant that has been performed.
 - F. Employees in research grant or time-limited positions who have been selected for a position on a different grant or who are going into an FTE position must terminate from one position before being hired into the second position. The employee's salary and benefits must be determined in the same manner as for an FTE position. Annual and sick leave, if applicable, may be transferred from one grant to another or to an FTE position if approved by the receiving department. If a nonexempt employee is promoted or transferred to another department, or transferred from one grant to another or to an FTE

position, the employee must be allowed to use all accrued compensatory time or be paid for all such time prior to the employee promoting or transferring. (See University policy HR 1.84, “Minimum Wage and Overtime Compensation”) Employment in H-1B status is both employer and position specific; transfer to a new department may require action vis-à-vis the Labor Department and Immigration. Consult with the office of International Support for Faculty and Staff prior to changes in the terms, conditions or location of employment.

G. Changing from Research Grant or Time-limited Status to Permanent Status

1. An employee in a research grant or time-limited position may apply for and be considered for employment in a permanent position in the same manner as any other applicant. If hired into a permanent position, the employee’s salary will be determined by the hiring department and the Office of Salary Administration according to established University policies concerning position classification and compensation.
2. Time worked as a research grant or time-limited employee does not count toward state service. The leave base date will be determined when the employee is appointed to a permanent position.
3. Time worked in a research grant or time-limited position will be counted toward the employee’s leave base date.

H. Changing from Permanent to Research Grant or Time-Limited Status

1. A permanent employee may be hired through established procedures into a research grant or time-limited position provided the following conditions are met:
 - a. The change from permanent employment status to research grant or time-limited status must be voluntary.
 - b. Prior to entering research grant or time-limited status, permanent employees must be paid for unused annual leave or annual and sick leave may be transferred if approved by the receiving department. Non-exempt employees with a compensatory leave balance must be paid prior to a change to research grant or time-limited status.
 - c. The employee must sign the Research Grant or Time-limited Position Agreement to document his or her understanding and acceptance of the terms and conditions of employment in research grant or time-limited status.
2. A permanent employee who voluntarily accepts a change of status into a research grant or time-limited position will:

- a. Forfeit grievance rights, if any.
- b. Forfeit permanent state service status.
- c. Experience a break in service.
- e. Forfeit unused sick leave unless the leave is authorized under the grant or is transferred to the research grant or time-limited position.
- f. Forfeit reduction-in-force rights.

I. Transferring from One Research Grant or Time-Limited Position to Another

- 1. An employee in a research grant or time-limited position may apply for and be considered for employment in another research grant or time-limited position in the same manner as any other applicant.
- 2. Time worked as a research grant or time-limited employee will be counted toward the leave base date upon transferring to another research grant or time-limited position.
- 3. Unused annual leave earned under research grant or time-limited status may be paid before the employee enters another research grant or time-limited position, depending upon funds available in the grant. If a nonexempt employee is promoted or transferred to another department, or transferred from one grant to another, the employee must be allowed to use all accrued compensatory time or be paid for all such time prior to the employee promoting or transferring. (See University Policy HR 1.84 Minimum Wage and Overtime Compensation)

III. Procedures

A. Establishing a Research Grant or Time-limited Position

- 1. The department sends an online position description with the Research Grant or Time-limited Position Action form to the USC Office of Salary Administration. If the position is time-limited, a copy of the contract should be attached to the online position description.

The following statement is required on all research grant position descriptions as the last sentence under the job purpose: “This position is established in support of expanded research activities or projects.”

- 2. Upon receipt of the information listed above, the USC Office of Salary Administration will determine an appropriate title based on the duties described in the position description and establish the research grant or time-limited position.

The department's HR contact and/or the principal investigator of the grant will be notified.

3. The principal investigator may then advertise the position following University policy concerning advertising and recruitment through USC Jobs. If the position requires a background or credit check, a satisfactory check should be completed at this point in the process.
4. A PBP-2 hiring packet should be routed through the University's Employment Office to the Office of Salary Administration when the position is filled.

B. Salary Determination for Research Grant or Time-limited Employees

1. Salaries for research grant or time-limited employees must be based on the individual's education and experience in the related field.
2. For staff employees in research grant or time-limited positions, salaries higher than the advertised rate may be considered if the successful candidate has exceptionally strong qualifications or if there are other compelling circumstances. Requests for salaries above the advertised rate should be sent to the Office of Salary Administration in the same format as for a hire-above-minimum request for a permanent employee.
3. If the prospective employee is a foreign national, the compensation must be approved in advance by the USC Office of Salary Administration in consultation with the Office of International Support for Faculty and Staff.
4. An employee in a research grant or time-limited position may work part-time for additional compensation in a different position not related to the employee's research grant or time-limited position. To seek approval for additional compensation, both the home department and the requesting department must complete the Research Grant or Time-limited Additional Compensation Request Form.

C. Termination of Research Grant or Time-limited Employees – End of Grant

1. Two weeks prior to the ending date of the grant, a Notice of Separation (form PBP-7) must be sent by the department to the USC Office of Salary Administration to terminate the research grant or time-limited employees. The termination effective date should be the last day worked, but no later than the grant ending date. The PBP-7 form may be found on the Human Resources website at <http://hr.sc.edu/forms.html>.
2. Reduction-in-force plans are not required for the termination of research grant or time-limited employees at the conclusion of the grant or contract.

IV. Reasons for Revision

- A. Changes the name of the employment category from temporary grant to research grant or time-limited positions.
- B. Provides that research grant or time-limited positions may be established using medical school practice plans, individual private gifts, externally generated revenue for service or testing activities, and grant-generated revenue or a combination of these funding sources in addition to approved grant funds.
- C. Provides that research grant positions may be established using other funds during the proposal development or pre-award stages of grant funding in anticipation of specific grant or project funding.
- D. Provides that a research grant or time-limited employee may work part-time for additional compensation in a different position not related to the employee's research grant or time-limited position.
- E. Allows the discretion to use grant-generated revenue to pay the salaries and/or benefits of research grant or time-limited employees between the expiration of one grant and the subsequent renewal of the same or similar grant.
- F. Provides that the use of grant-generated revenue does not alter the at-will employment status of research grant or time-limited project employees.
- G. Provides that annual and sick leave may be transferred from a one research grant or time-limited position to another or to an FTE position with approval of the receiving department.
- H. Provides that the leave base date may be computed for a research grant or time-limited employee the same as for an employee in an FTE position.